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Gone, but not Forgotten:

Historical glimpses of the Lake Sonoma area

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GONE, BUT NOT FORGOTTEN:

HISTORICAL GLIMPSES OF THE LAKE SONOMA AREA

1984

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Acknowledgments

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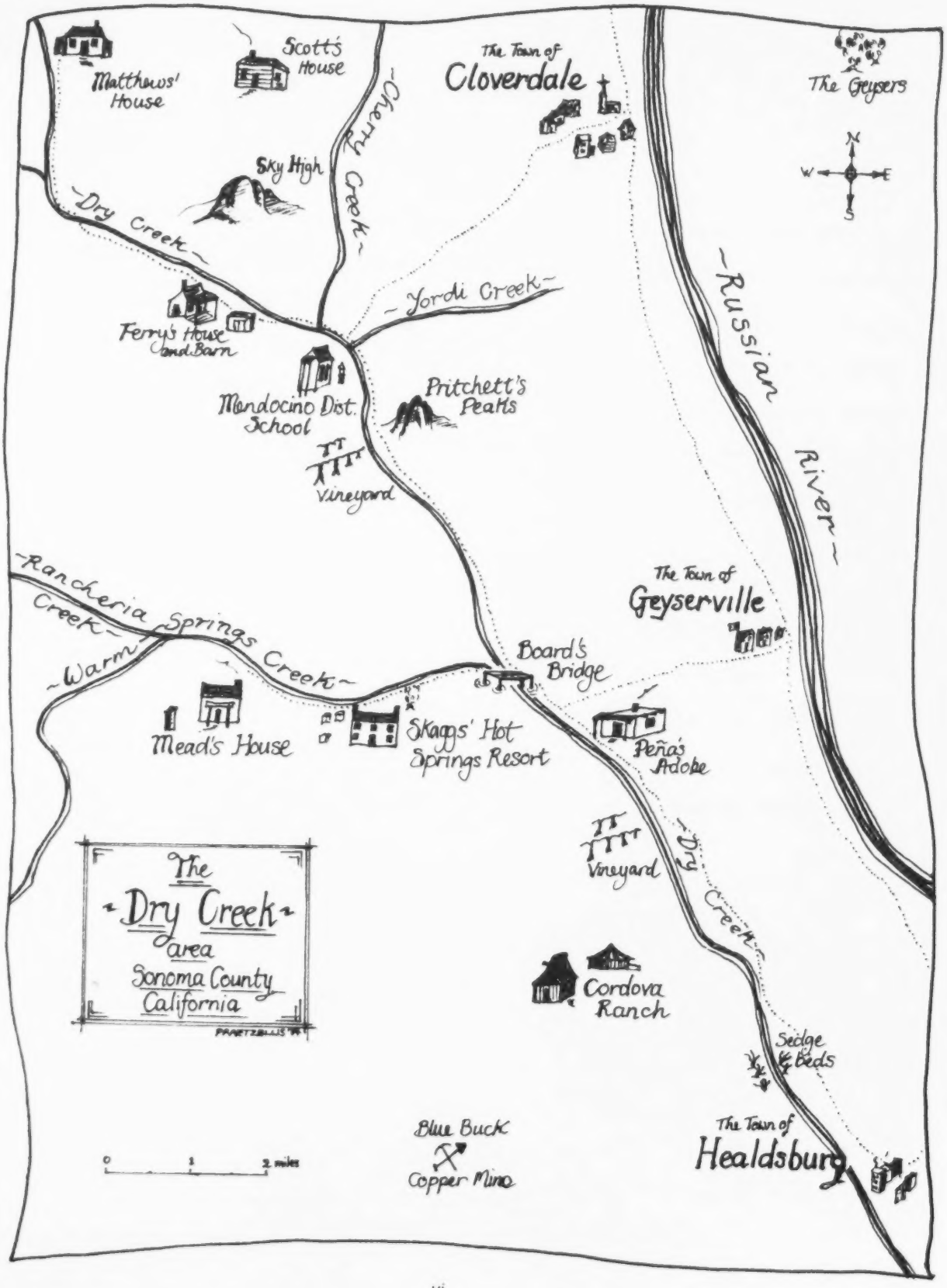
We would also like to acknowledge the administrative support given to the Warm Springs Cultural Resources Study in general and this report in particular by the Sonoma State University Academic Foundation, Inc., Rohnert Park, California, and by the University's Anthropology Studies Center; and to acknowledge Dr. Richard N. Lerner, who served as General Editor of the final report publications.

Adrian Praetzellis
Mary Praetzellis

Warm Springs Cultural Resources Study


Matthews' House
Scott's House
The Town of Cloverdale
The Geysers
Sky High
Dry Creek
Crocker Creek
Yordi Creek
Russian River
Ferry's House and Barn
Mendocino Dist. School
Pritchett's Peaks
Vineyard
Rancheria Creek
Warm Springs Creek
The Town of Geyserville
Board's Bridge
Mead's House
Skaggs' Hot Springs Resort
Peña's Adobe
Vineyard
Dry Creek
The Dry Creek area Sonoma County California
Cordova Ranch
Sedge beds
Blue Buck Copper Mine
The Town of Healdsburg
0 1 2 miles

Introduction

At present, only the Fish Hatchery staff actually lives on the seventeen thousand acres of government property around Lake Sonoma, a little over two hours' drive north from San Francisco. But the area was not always characterized by this emptiness. For thousands of years, native peoples made this their home and occupied permanent villages and seasonal campsites throughout the area. The pressure of Euroamerican settlement changed the size and location of these native settlements, but Pomoan Indians continued as a part of the region's population. In the 1840s, part of the area was occupied by Mexican settlers who raised horses and cattle on large, unfenced ranchos. A few years later, following the California Gold Rush of 1849, many Americans came to the area and established farms and ranches. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the area flourished with people and activities. Large families kept several schools in session, and settlers socialized and quarrelled with their neighbors. This bustle of activity, and the families who thrived on it, had been nearly forgotten when the Warm Springs Cultural Resources Study began its investigations.

Warm Springs Dam-Lake Sonoma During Construction; junction of Dry and Warm Springs creeks.

Folklorist Henry Glassie has written that "history is one of the best entrances to self awareness." As most of us are ordinary folk, we may find our own roots in both fact and fancy while learning about the just ordinary people who once lived in the Lake Sonoma Area. While doing historic research for this project, one of the authors of this pamphlet discovered that many of her relatives had homesteaded land in the Dry Creek uplands. Further historical detective work led to the acquaintance of a long-lost aunt, who had a large collection of her father's papers, including dozens of letters from the author's great-grandparents. Thus, in this case, archaeology, documentary research, oral history, and family history happily coincided.

The people who are featured in the sketches that follow really lived in the Lake Sonoma Area. Their portraits are based on information collected by archaeologists, anthropologists, historians, and other scientists. Our aim is to present the history of the area as the life experiences of these individuals. In this way, we hope the reader will gain a feeling of familiarity and respect for the ordinary folk of the past, who actually experienced and molded the events and processes that we call "history."

Although we are sure of the accuracy of the facts that are presented, the portraits we have created of these people as individuals are our impressions. Each sketch is based on dozens of sources; to reference each would require more pages than the sketches themselves. The sources used to create just one paragraph in the first portrait are shown on page 3 to give the reader an idea of the narratives' factual basis. Each sketch represents a different kind of people: John Ferry, one-time successful sheep rancher who, like many others, misread the economic signs; Grace Hicks, the school teacher, an outsider who found life in this rural area restrictive; Louis Mead, content to farm for his own needs rather than in the hope of becoming a rich man; and Juana Cook, an elderly Dry Creek Indian woman who had lived through many changes in the valley. Our final chapter describes two archaeologists going about their work as Warm Springs Dam and Lake Sonoma were being built, and why and how projects such as this are done.

A Section of Text and the References used to create it

The landscape had changed considerably over the past twenty years. (1) Open spaces grew as ranchers cleared pasture for their livestock, and trees gave way to grassland. (2) Ferry knew that other people had lived in the area before him. An Indian village had once existed in his lower field, where he often found arrowheads and heavy stone mortars when plowing. (3) The presence of the dark soil marking the old village was one reason he decided to purchase the ranch, for it was well known that such areas produced bountiful crops. (4) Although Ferry was an ambitious and informed man, with one of the best properties in the uplands, he was still having a difficult time deciding exactly which crops were his bet. (5) He had started out with a dairy, but his ranch was far from town, and transportation was often difficult. (6) The wagon trip to Cloverdale took over two hours on a good day, and the road was often impassable during bad weather. (7)

Since then he had tried both stock cattle and sheep. (8) Sheep seemed to do better on his rugged range, especially during the dry years. (9) Lambing was a problem, because sheep gave birth during the winter and many young lambs died of the cold. (10) Wool prices were high, however, and many ranchers had made their fortunes in sheep. (11) Nevertheless, Ferry was considering purchasing fifty Jersey cows soon. (12) He also planned to put in a new orchard in the spring and, perhaps, a vineyard next year. (13)

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12 *Eliza Matthews to George Matthews, 9 November 1886.*

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Dry Creek Uplands, October 1886

John Ferry walked out onto his back porch and surveyed the domain he called his own. It was all his, as far as the eye could see; down the narrow, heavily wooded valley of Dry Creek to the property of Sylvester Scott, and up Dry Creek to the homestead claim of old man Fraser.

On this wet October afternoon, Dry Creek certainly was not living up to its name as it raced past below. In fact, Ferry could not remember a year when Dry Creek did not flow. Neighbors often complained that the uplands knew only two seasons: the biting cold of frosty winter mornings, and the raging heat of the dry summer days. The same could be said of Dry Creek itself; while sometimes it was a lazy stream, at other times it was a destructive torrent. During the rainy season, Dry Creek and the smaller creeks that flowed into it often flooded their banks, washing away roads, trails, bridges, and whatever else obstructed their furious paths. In the summer, Dry Creek was a languid, shallow stream, except for a few deep pools. These pools made excellent swimming holes on a hot afternoon. But now, as this unseasonably early storm reminded him, winter was on its way again. It was time to harvest the potatoes, to repair the bee house, to fix the chimney and the roof, to prepare for the wet, the cold, and the wind that would surely come. One could expect frost here in northern Sonoma County any time from mid-October to late May.

The landscape had changed considerably over the past twenty years. Open spaces grew as ranchers cleared pasture for their livestock, and trees gave way to grassland. Ferry knew that other people had lived in the area before him. An Indian village had once existed in his lower field, where he often found arrowheads and heavy stone mortars when plowing. The presence of the dark soil marking the old village was one reason he decided to purchase the ranch, for it was well known that such areas produced bountiful crops. Although Ferry was an ambitious and informed man, with one of the best properties in the uplands, he was still having a difficult time deciding exactly which crops and livestock were his best bet. He had started out with a dairy, but his ranch was far from town, and transportation was often difficult. The wagon trip to Cloverdale took over two hours on a good day, and the road was often impassable during bad weather.

Since then he had tried both stock cattle and sheep. Sheep seemed to do better on his rugged range, especially during the dry years. Lambing was a problem, because sheep gave birth during the winter and many young lambs died of the cold. Wool prices were high, however, and many ranchers had made their fortunes in sheep. Nevertheless, Ferry was considering purchasing fifty Jersey cows soon. He also planned to put in a new orchard in the spring and, perhaps, a vineyard next year. Agriculture was expanding, and one had to keep up with one's neighbors.

John Ferry sat down and lit his pipe. Thirty-five years of hard work had left their mark on him. He had that weather-beaten look of dignity characteristic of so many pioneers. Soon he would be old. The coming winter was not the only thing troubling John Ferry. He had just received some particularly worrisome news from town which brought out his every wrinkle. Two banks had attached the property of his friend and neighbor Sylvester Scott for bad debts.

The failure of Sylvester Scott was causing great excitement. It was said that he owed money to nearly all of the

working men in Cloverdale, some as much as one thousand dollars. As yet, no one knew exactly what had gone wrong, or if Sylvester would be able to weather the storm with his ranch intact. In the meantime, panic had struck. Vandals had burned the hop house of Sylvester's half-brother, Tom, and claim jumpers were taking advantage of the chaos to move onto local properties. It certainly meant trouble. John Ferry, as the local Justice of the Peace, would have to look after the shearing of Sylvester's sheep, the profit from which would go to the creditors.

John Ferry was glad he had never loaned Sylvester any money, but even so his ranch was threatened. Wells Fargo detectives, government land inspectors, and bank agents were all converging on the area. Other ranchers faced the same circumstances that had apparently ruined Sylvester Scott. One of the neighbors actually credited Sylvester's failure to the punishment of God: "My parents told me," so she said, "whosoever spit against heaven, it fell in his face, and it is so in Scott's case. He was always blaspheming." Ferry knew better. He attributed the failure to more human factors, misfortunes which might strike any rancher, including himself.

Sylvester Scott was one of the first settlers in the area. He had the largest ranch, best livestock, and greatest influence of anyone living nearby. At age sixteen, Sylvester had left his hometown in Wisconsin for the gold fields of California. Within the next few years he moved to Healdsburg, where he met his future wife, Malinda Miller. As a young girl, Malinda had crossed the plains in a covered wagon with her grandparents. The Millers settled near Healdsburg before 1850 and became well known in the area, for Valentine Miller had brought the makings of a distillery with him. He was most successful at his trade, and it was often said of them: "Mr. Miller was a distiller and Mrs. Miller, she drank." Aunt Katie, as she was called, was definitely partial to a dram. It had become almost a local tradition for some wag to recount her story every Fourth of July: Many years ago, the men were going off for their private celebration of the Fourth; not wishing to leave Katie in possession of the whiskey jug, they hid it in a tree. Katie eventually found her prize and, putting a washtub below the jug, she shot a hole into her target. The liquor trickled into the tub, and Katie entertained herself on her favorite beverage and enjoyed the holiday in her own way.

The Scott Ranch was already well established when John Ferry, his wife Mary, their four young children, and John's stepfather moved to the uplands in 1870. The area was very different from their native Ireland, but John seldom regretted having left the Emerald Isle. The rumors of the fertility of California had made him displeased with his lot, and, as a young man, John Ferry set out to find his place in the Mighty West. He was disappointed, however, to find that there were no abundant reserves of fertile land, free for the taking. There were, indeed, large areas of government land, but the earliest settlers had staked possessory claims to the best of it. In the early days, these possessory claims were bought and sold as if they were legal title, which they were not. Most local ranchers were now trying to secure the title to their land. This was a tricky situation for, by law, an individual could only purchase 320 acres from the United States General Land Office, and a workable sheep or cattle ranch required at least four times that amount.

More than fifteen years before, John Ferry had purchased a possessory claim to a ranch of about three thousand acres for seven thousand dollars, a lot of money for land that was technically public property. Since then he had been

Hunters in the Dry Creek Uplands (photo courtesy of Betty Snyder)

gradually repurchasing his ranch from the government. After reaching his legal limit, Ferry paid other people to patent the land from the government and then sell it to him. All of the ranches in the area were being consolidated in this way, using friends, relatives, and hired hands as intermediary agents between the government and the rancher. This practice had many drawbacks; it was expensive and technically illegal. But it was also necessary, for outsiders could also purchase one's possessory claim. In the ranchers' opinion, the public land laws were a mess and benefited only the land attorneys, who made a fortune advising clients on which loophole to purchase property through, and how to outsmart one's neighbor in boundary disputes.

John Ferry was, in fact, engaged in just such a quarrel with his neighbor to the northwest, Robert Hood. Bottomland along Dry Creek was very valuable, and both men had their eyes on the homestead claim of Thomas Fraser. Although Fraser had lived on the piece of land for more than twenty years, he had only recently filled out a homestead application for it. Fraser was an old man, who lived on his own and had no heirs; when he died the land would be up for grabs. John Ferry and Thomas Fraser had a gentlemen's agreement that Tom would sell John the

land when he received legal title to it; in return, Tom would receive the right to live there until he died and John's protection from other expansion hungry neighbors like Hood.

Recently, this feud had been brewing into what neighbors described as a small war. As Hood's property surrounded Fraser's, Hood had attempted to fence Fraser in and block his access to the Cloverdale wagon road by cutting large trees down in his path. Fraser cut through the fence and the trees. Hood's next move was to call in the local doctor, who committed Fraser to the poor house in Santa Rosa. The doctor proclaimed that Fraser was unable to care for himself and would not last the winter. Mr. Hood, pleased with this turn of events, told a neighbor that he wished Fraser "would live to suffer his own miseries." Hood must have regretted these words when Tom Fraser returned a few months later, looking well and feeling frisky. Fraser did not seem like a dying man when he dared Hood to cross the fence so he could nail him. They almost had a shoot out that day, but Fraser put down his gun and let Hood pass. Now Hood was trying to get Fraser put back in the poor house, but Ferry was placing obstacles in his way, and this time it would not be so easy. Ferry was not about to be "Hood-winked" again. And so the fight went on. Hood's son shot Ferry's dog. Ferry, however, had just found out that Hood's title to his land was not as secure as Hood thought. Ferry could probably use this knowledge to good advantage, and Hood might be content just to keep the land he called his own, without expanding at the expense of his neighbors. The battle was not over yet; it would probably soon become a legal fight as well.

The uplands would not be the same if Sylvester Scott was forced to leave. He had helped put Cloverdale on the map by winning numerous awards for his Durham bulls and cows at the State Agricultural Fair. Mazourkas, Duke of Sonoma, Alice Gray, and Lady Maynard had been just a few of his prize winners that would now have to be sold. But more than that, Sylvester was a local character, well known for his imposing size and sharp temper. He was also a famous hunter and once claimed he had killed a bear and a panther for every day of the year. Those were the days. John Ferry remembered going on week-long bear hunting expeditions with Sylvester and other neighboring ranchers. Eventually, bears became scarce, and now such hunts were a novelty, although Sylvester had a collection of three hundred bear skins to verify both his prowess as a hunter and the animal's past abundance. Ranchers still hunted the panthers and coyotes that killed their sheep, but these predators were not nearly the problem they once had been. Deer and quail now provided hunters with their sport and many homesteaders with an income, for such game brought a good price in city markets.

Hunting had always been great in the Dry Creek uplands, drawing many prominent people into the area. Malinda Scott was related to Joaquin Miller, the famous Gold Rush poet, well known for his bizarre antics and sentimental verse. Billing himself as "the Byron of the Rockies," Joaquin had recently toured Europe and the British Isles, where Londoners were quite amused by his frontier dress and unpredictable nature. Through Joaquin, many members of the European and British nobility learned of the fabulous hunting in the Dry Creek uplands and of the colorful hunter, Sylvester Scott. When these groups came hunting, John Ferry always kept his older daughters close to home, for deer was not the only game these men were after.

John Ferry could see his six youngest children coming home from the Mendocino District School. The walk was a long one, and the children

generally entertained themselves along the way. This time they were following a rough trail just above the creek, rather than taking the easier route along the wagon road. A city father might have felt anxious seeing his young children walking so near a rushing creek, but children in the uplands learned early how to handle themselves in this rugged terrain and had the proper respect for situations of danger. Besides, they needed some adventure between the hours they had spent in the schoolhouse and the chores they would have to do when they arrived home.

Most neighbors within the school's five-mile jurisdiction regularly sent their children to class. Education was highly valued and seen by many to be the key to future success. One of the first things Ferry had wanted when he moved to the area was a school. He and Sylvester had first organized it, and John was the school clerk, as he had been for the past fifteen years. Sylvester, as the father of twenty children, and John, as the father of eleven, had good reason to be interested in the running of the school. There had been many more families and pupils in the early days.

Washing Day in the Dry Creek Uplands [double exposure] (photo courtesy of Betty Snyder)

Now the school's enrollment was only half of what it had been ten years earlier. Many families had been unable to scrape a livelihood from their small homestead claims. They stayed only the five-year legal requirement to claim their free 160 acres; then they quickly sold out and moved on. Ferry did not understand how a family like the Fords, with five young children, had survived for five years on their 200-acre claim with only a few dozen chickens, some hogs, a couple of milk cows and horses, and a few acres of Indian corn, wheat, and potatoes. The Fords now lived in Healdsburg, and Tom Scott owned their land. There had once been many subsistence farmers like the Fords, but these small enterprises were currently being bought out by their more affluent neighbors.

There was, in fact, a general movement from rural areas such as the Dry Creek uplands to towns and cities. And it was not only the small farmers who were leaving the countryside; the young people from rich and poor rural families found the attractions of city life irresistible. The District Supervisor of the State Agricultural Society had only recently spoken on the subject. He found it "surprising that the young men who had been reared on the farm should be ambitious to decorate by their manly presence, the street corners of our cities, or to measure their lives by bolts and yards of calico." John Ferry agreed, but he had been unable to keep his oldest son, Tom, from leaving the ranch. At least, John consoled himself, Tom worked laying wire for the telegraph company and not measuring cloth.

In the kitchen, at the rear of the house, Mary Ferry labored over the evening's dinner. The boys had been out hog hunting recently, and pork was to be the main course that night. In fact, pork would have to be the main course until the meat was used up, as there was no way of storing it except by salting or smoking. All of the locals ate a lot of pork, for large numbers of semi-wild hogs roamed throughout the uplands, feeding on roots and acorns. At harvest time, people rounded up these hogs and fed them on what was left on the just-harvested field. They slaughtered some for future use and drove the remainder to market. Hogs supplied the poor farmers with one of their main sources of income and meat.

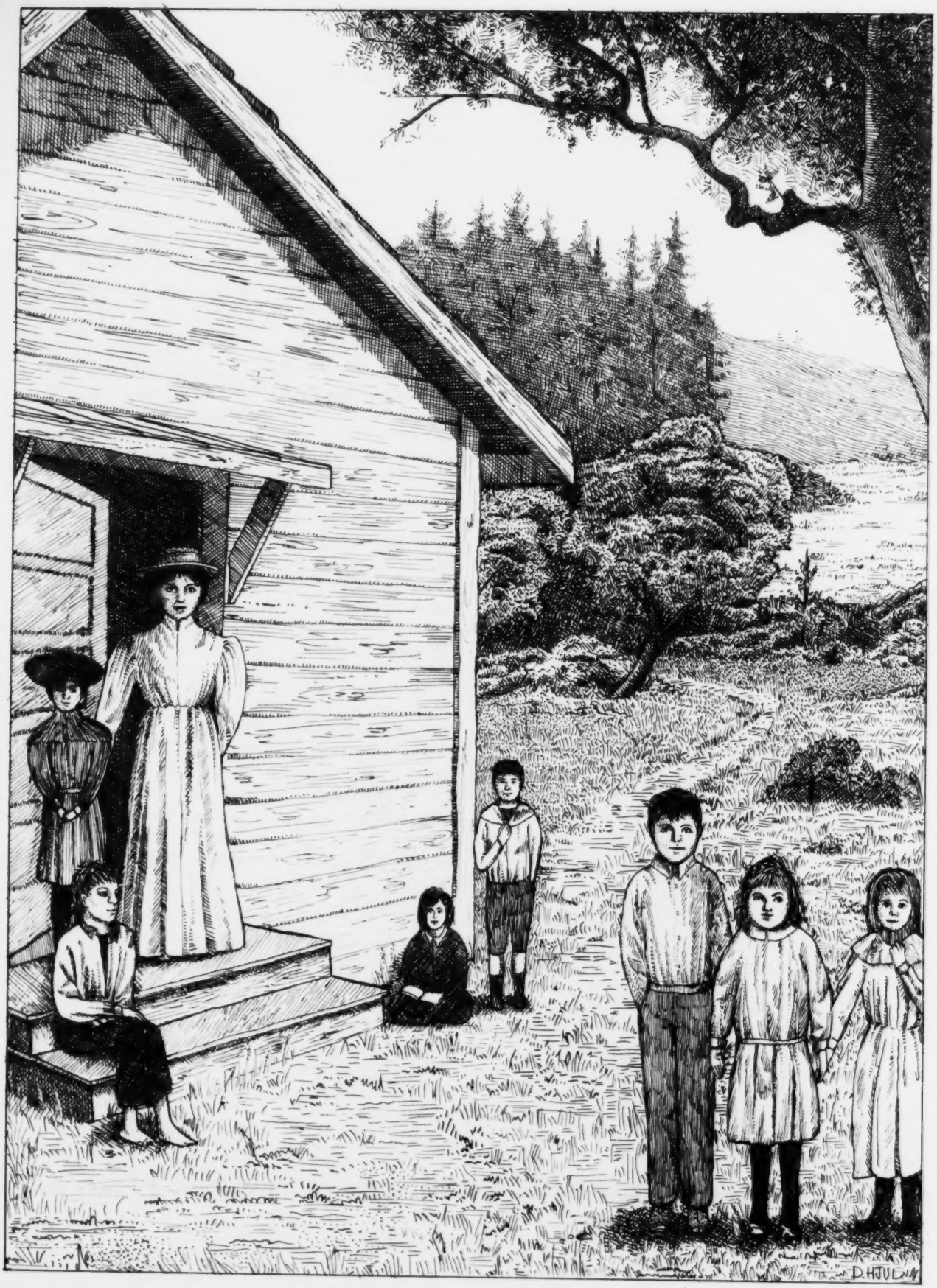
Mary could see that John was upset about Sylvester's bankruptcy. Like the Scotts, their ranch had mortgage problems from the beginning. Each time John renewed the mortgage, its cost increased. Their next crisis would be in less than two years, when the seven thousand dollar mortgage would fall due. Cash was so hard to keep. It was a precarious position to be in, but there was no other way to be a sheep rancher in these parts without the capital for land, fences, and animals. Mary prayed every day for good weather, good business, and good luck.

Mary often felt homesick for Ireland, not so much for the place as for the people. She felt lonely and isolated on the ranch. Mary knew she was fortunate; she did not have to work as hard as the wives of less successful men. Poor Eliza Matthews to the north worked very hard, as her husband was not well and her eldest son was away at college. Last winter she had taken full charge of the family's cows. Mary was also glad she had daughters who could help out with the work and share her interests, but still she longed for the companionship of other women. During the winter and times of sickness, the poor roads and lack of close neighbors made life especially difficult. It was different in Ireland. There the ties of family and religion made for a tight community. Not like in the Dry Creek uplands, where neighbors distrusted each other and disagreed on everything from politics to roadwork. Mary felt closest to the other Irish Catholic women

in the neighborhood, but she wished her sister or some other female relative lived nearby, for one could always depend on one's family for counsel and support. Malinda and Margret Scott were very lucky to live so close to each other. The two women often did their household chores together and took comfort in each other's presence. But now, that too was probably over if Sylvester lost his ranch. She felt very sorry for the Scott family, especially Malinda and all those children.

Postscript

When John Ferry's mortgage fell due in 1888, he was able to renew it. In 1891, even with the general economic climate in terrible condition, Ferry was again able to renew the mortgage. His luck ran out, however, in 1897: the man he owed the money to died, and the heirs foreclosed when Ferry could not make the payment. John and Mary lost their ranch, moved onto a neighboring, much smaller parcel homesteaded by their son, and tried to begin again.


D.HJUL

Dry Creek Uplands, November 1910

Miss Grace Hicks was almost finished cleaning out her desk in the small cottage that served as the Mendocino District School. She had taught here for only four months, but somehow she had accumulated a lot of papers. Grace felt very warm and slightly ill. It was late afternoon and the cast-iron stove in the middle of the room had been burning all day. The older boys had been trapping skunks recently, and when their jackets got warm, the distinctive smell of skunk filled the air. Although skunk collars and cuffs were now very fashionable in the city, Grace doubted that she could ever bring herself to wear them.

Grace stepped out onto the porch for a breath of fresh air. From the outside, the school looked like a small farmhouse; like farmhouses, it was built of redwood and covered with clapboard, with a front gable and a small porch. Out in the back stood a pair of two-seater privies, one for the girls and one for the boys. The children, especially the younger ones, dreaded going out to the "holehouse," and Grace did not blame them. Rattlesnakes, spiders, and stinging insects could catch one there in the most awkward position.

It was almost Thanksgiving and time for the school to close for the rainy season. The school year here was very different from the year in the town of Cloverdale or even in the Dry Creek Valley nearby. Here school was in session throughout the summer and closed in the winter. It was simply too difficult to travel in this rugged area during bad weather.

The schoolhouse was located on the Surrey Ranch, about two-and-a-half miles from the homes of Orville Baldwin and his foreman, Jeff Smalley. Orville Baldwin owned one of the largest ranches in the area. It was about eight thousand acres in size and had thirty-four miles of boundary. Seven smaller ranches had been bought up to form this giant parcel before it was sold to Orville's father in 1903. Bountiful orchards and beautiful flowering gardens could still be found about the property as silent reminders of the families who first settled here. A few of the old buildings remained standing, while others lay in ruins. In fact, Grace boarded with the Smalleys in a pleasant two-story house that had been built by Sylvester Scott, a pioneer about whom the children recounted the most exaggerated stories.

On her arrival at the Baldwins' ranchstead, Grace had been surprised by its unusual mixture of practical agricultural outbuildings and whimsical, leisure-time improvements. In addition to wagon sheds, a tool house, blacksmith shop, and two barns, she found an aviary, a swimming hole, and an alligator pond. The alligator had caused her quite a start. The pond had been her last stop on a tour of the Baldwin's garden and menagerie. Grace had stood by the picket fence, wondering what would be inside this enclosure, when old "Quilp," the alligator, lunged from the water and gave an awful roar with his mouth wide open and his teeth glistening. It made her laugh to remember the scream she had let out in response to Quilp's greeting.

It was cold outside and Grace quickly returned to her desk, leaving the door open for ventilation. Looking at the dull and in some places muddy floor, Miss Hicks made a mental note to herself to have it cleaned later on. The last time she'd done it was just before the last community dance, and it would have to be done again before the school closed for the winter. The floor

was regularly treated with linseed oil to keep the dust down, but the job was done with particular care before any school social event. Grace remembered the dance that had been held recently. The Baldwin and Smalley children had all danced very well, but Mr. Smalley was hopeless. Mr. Baldwin had even tied his right leg to Mr. Smalley's left leg in an attempt to teach him the barn dance. What a pair they made. Mr. Smalley did fairly well as long as they were tied together, but when left on his own again, he was still out of step. Mr. Matthews was quite a good dancer, but then he had spent a week taking lessons with Mr. Hebard, a dance instructor in San Francisco.

Although there had been good times, Grace was not planning to return when classes began again in April. She was not sorry to be leaving and understood now why so few teachers taught in this district for more than one term. Never in her life had Grace worked so hard. She had done more for the Smalleys than any other teacher had attempted to do. "I have been foolish to help them out," she thought. The more one does for some people, the less they appreciate it. After Grace had been living with the Smalleys for a short while, Mrs. Smalley had come to her and asked for help with the housework, and Grace had said she would try to help. Since then, from the time Grace got up in the morning until school was out in the afternoon, she worked steadily, either teaching, washing dishes, or sweeping. It was constant work, staying steadily at the place, not even a horseback ride or a ride to town. And now she was leaving and not even a thanks or a goodbye had she received from Mr. Smalley, although she had been a teacher and a servant too. But Grace the schoolteacher had learned her lesson; in future she would not be so willing to help.

Grace Hicks was just eighteen years old. She had only recently graduated from the San Jose Normal School, and this had been her first paid teaching position. She had come with good recommendations, not only from her school principal, but from her brothers, who were friends of George Matthews, head of the Mendocino District School Board of Trustees. Ownie Smith, part owner of the neighboring Hot Springs Ranch, had also written to Mr. Matthews on her behalf. Grace had corresponded with Mr. Matthews a number of times before he invited her to come meet the members of the board who had to approve the appointment. She remembered how in one letter Mr. Matthews had written that she had "maid" a mistake in grammar in one of her letters. Grace had known it would not help her cause to inform him of his own error. She dutifully traveled to Cloverdale, met Mr. Matthews, Mr. Baldwin, and Mr. Smalley, and was told to report to the school in a week. She had been so excited to start her new career, that the week's wait seemed like months. But now Grace wondered how many experienced teachers would have so eagerly sought such an isolated post. She was sad and lonely: her mother had recently died, and she missed her brothers and family friends. It was hard coming as an outsider into the widely scattered but closely knit Dry Creek settlement. Without a home of her own or kinfolk to defend her good name, Grace felt very visible and defenseless as a target for local gossip. She had written to a friend that when country people got together, their conversation was usually limited to a few topics: weather, dogs, livestock, and the imagined courtship of the local school teacher.

There were, in fact, a number of handsome, eligible bachelors in the area. But Grace had been particularly careful to behave in the most correct and professional manner in their presence and to give the gossips no fuel for scandal. Her predecessor, Miss Lesser, had not been so careful and tongues had wagged. Rumors had circulated regarding a local rancher

who was reported making "goo-goo eyes at the new school ma'am." A lady friend had written to this rancher, repeating this gossip as it had reached her ears in San Francisco:

> That she has her own saddle horse and rides about a great deal with a certain neighborly Rancher, not a thousand miles away from the Baldwins Ranch. And when she goes to Santa Rosa for a few days, I am sure he must be very lonesome--but he is on hand, like the gallant young gentleman I know him to be, to escort her to her erstwhile home, and such a cordial greeting as she received--well it spoke for itself.

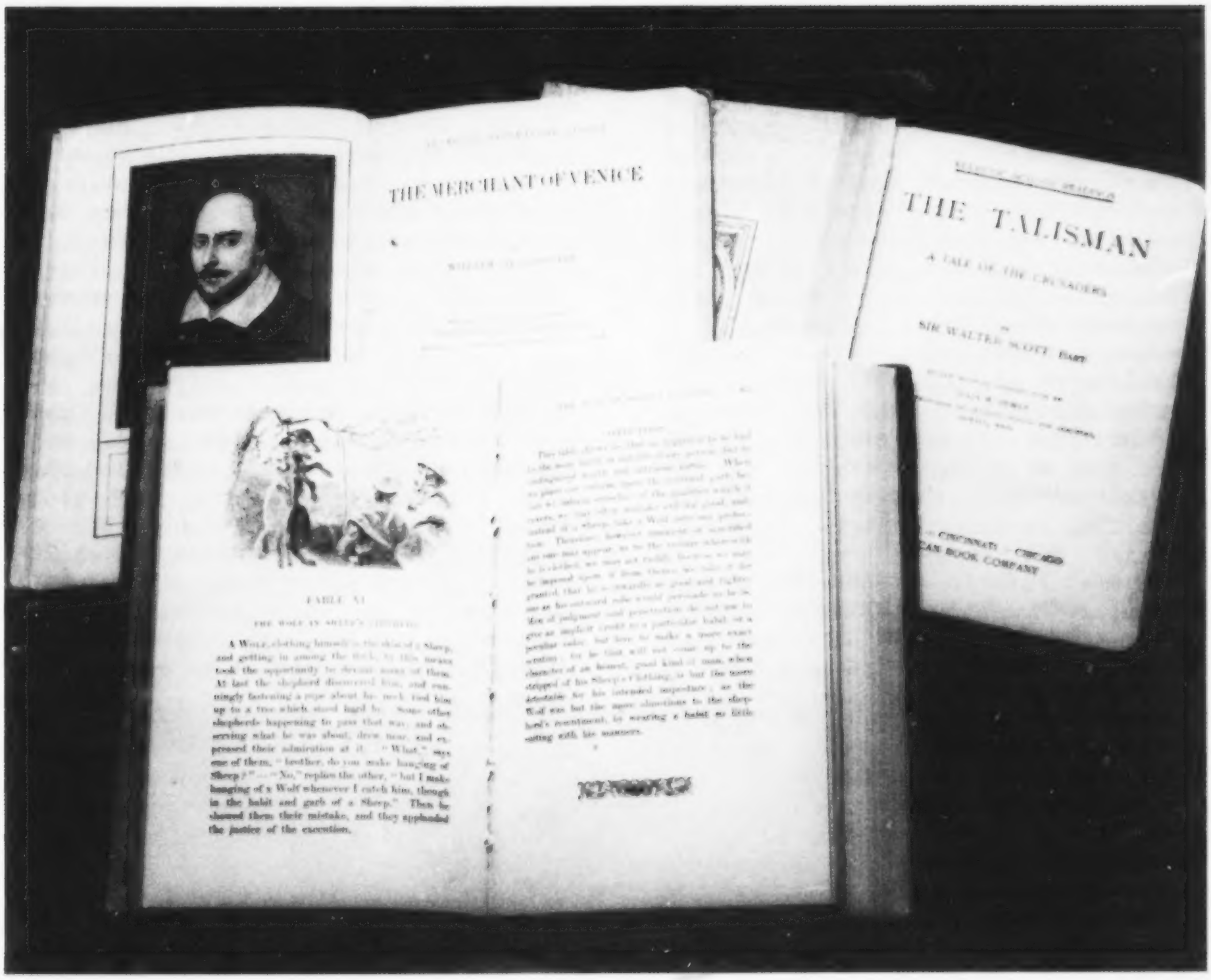
Having been the target of these same talebearers herself, the letter writer was irate at the lack of privacy even in the seemingly remote Dry Creek uplands. She complained bitterly of one gossip in particular:

> How that old hen can keep track of the private affairs of the rest of the Nation baffles me. She has seven children to take care of and a house to keep neat and clean, and that ought to keep any woman busy and happy, but she seems never so happy as when she has percipitated herself into the innermost secrets of her neighbors far and near.

At least Grace had kept her good name and, to her knowledge, had never been the subject of such talk. She had also been fortunate in having no older pupils. These one-room country schools usually provided instruction for children in grades one through eight. When there were no high schools nearby, however, pupils could attend the district grammar school through tenth

"Schoolma'am" and Friend out for a ride in the Dry Creek Uplands (photo courtesy Betty Snyder)

Texts used in the Mendocino District School


THE MERCHANT OF VENICE
THE TALISMAN
A TALE OF THE CRUSADERS
SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.
FABLE XI
A Wolf, clothing himself in the skin of a Sheep, and getting in among the flock by this means took the opportunity to devour many of them. At last the shepherd discovered him, and cunningly fastening a rope about his neck tied him up to a tree which stood hard by. Some other shepherds happening to pass that way, and observing what he was about, drew near, and expressed their admiration at it. "What," says one of them, "brother, do you make hanging of Sheep?" — "No," replies the other, "but I make hanging of a Wolf whenever I catch him, though in the habit and garb of a Sheep." Then he showed them their mistake, and they applauded the justice of the execution.

grade. It sometimes happened that teachers instructed pupils just a few years younger than themselves. The older boys often sported big crushes on their teachers. A friend of Grace's had had that problem once. When sitting next to one of the older boys to help him with a math problem, he reached his arm around her and gave her a squeeze. Not wanting to cause a commotion for both the boy and herself, she just looked at him and shook her head. This seemed to have done the trick, for after that, she had no more problems with him.

It certainly had been a challenge for Grace to teach in this one-room schoolhouse. Although there were not pupils in every grade, she still had been responsible for many subjects at many levels. The county required that all students be taught reading, language, spelling, arithmetic, physiology, penmanship, and ethics. The younger students also had lessons in drawing and music, while the older students struggled with the more difficult subjects: composition, geography, government, history, and bookkeeping. Grace could see the influence of Mr. Baldwin in the choice of school books, for although the Sonoma County School Board set forth the curriculum, the Mendocino District Board of Trustees ordered the books. Mr. Baldwin had a college education and was a gentleman. The Baldwin children only

attended the district school some of the time, particularly when it was in danger of closing because the average daily attendance might fall below the required number. Before that, the children had been taught by a governess, but now that they were in public school their father wished to make sure that their classical education was continued. The children were feasted on the great writers of English literature: Shakespeare and Sir Walter Scott and a large dosage of poetry. For history they studied ancient Rome. Looking over the bookshelf Grace wondered how many other rural schools were so equipped with such selections as the **Merchant of Venice, As You Like It, The Talisman, Ivanhoe,** and **Gilpin's Ride.** They also had a book on California plants that had become very popular with the children after the visit to the Matthews Ranch that summer of the noted horticulturist, Luther Burbank. The children had loved listening to him talk of his life and work and had come to call him "The Wizard."

Each night after school it was Grace's job to prepare the next day's lesson. Although she had only a small class, Grace had to tailor each child's lessons separately, for the children ranged so much in age and educational background. She didn't teach the more difficult subjects like geography and history every day, but spaced them throughout the week. She worked with a few children at a time, while the others studied and prepared their lessons. The older children often taught the younger ones, which was a great help. How on earth had teachers managed in the old days, when the Mendocino School had over sixty students?

Not all of the lessons were difficult, though. The school had a large stock of art supplies and even a box of building blocks for the very young. Grace also taught the children to sew and to weave, and on warm afternoons, they all went outside and played ball. The children seemed to enjoy school, and Grace did enjoy the children. She would miss them when she left.

The children in her class ranged in age from six to fourteen and in background from the children of a gentleman rancher to those of a poor Hungarian immigrant. Among the more comfortably off were Doris, Dwight, Drusilla, and Dalthea Baldwin, and Chardon and Ellis Smalley, who rode the two-and-one-half miles to school on ponies and donkeys each morning. They left home a good hour-and-a-half before school started, as they played along the way and often got sidetracked by various adventures. One rarely saw such a happy group of children--resourceful, independent, and delighted with the freedom of their country existence.

Not all of her pupils were as well provided for as the Baldwins. Ruth and Edgar Hirst walked three miles to school every day, bringing the old family cow with them to graze at leisure on Baldwin's pasture until it was again time to go home in the evening. The Hirst family had only a small claim and the oddest looking cow in the neighborhood; it had horns like a water buffalo's and looked more like some wild animal than like a domestic cow. The four eldest Ur children also attended classes. The Urs lived on a small claim on the other side of Dry Creek. The parents were Hungarians and almost illiterate, but the children tried very hard in school and were doing fine. The family was very poor and had nearly starved the previous winter, when Mr. Ur left them on the claim with no money and little food. According to local gossip, they had survived on stock corn gleaned from the remains of Mr. Baldwin's harvested field, which they had made into a sort of gruel. Luckily, Orville Baldwin had been passing by just when their corn meal had run out. Learning of their desperate situation, he brought one load of provisions from his own larder

and another load from Cloverdale.

There was no doubt that rancher Baldwin was a good neighbor, but he could also be thoughtless at times. On one occasion, Mr. Baldwin had refused to put a second seat in the wagon, forcing Grace to sit on sacks of rock salt and flour all the way from Cloverdale to the ranch. The trip took two-and-a-half hours; the sacks and Grace nearly fell at least once, and when she got back to the ranch, Grace could barely walk.

Grace had learned that teaching definitely had its ups and downs. There were, however, so few professions, or just plain jobs for that matter, open to women. Grace was paid seventy dollars a month, minus room and board, for teaching, and earned an extra four dollars doing janitor work around the school. Grace knew that some of her predecessors had let the children do the work, which consisted mainly of sweeping and oiling the floors, and earn the money, but Grace wanted to save as much of her salary as possible. She did not plan to teach school for the rest of her life. She wanted her own family and children, and even if she had the desire to keep working after she married, most school districts hired only single women.

No, Grace did not plan to return to teach another term here. She had found a post near Napa Junction, very close to her brother's ranch. She would no longer have to live with strangers and pay for board. Nearly all of her salary would soon be clear profit. She couldn't ask for more. Grace put the last few things in her bag, took one last look at the classroom and, making sure that the fire was out, left the building.

Postscript

The Mendocino District School remained open for another twenty-five years. There was never a very large number of students in attendance at one time, but over the years, scores of young people began their educational careers in this one-room schoolhouse. The school was closed in 1936. The building was used as a wood-chopper's cabin until it burned down some years later.

Warm Springs Creek, Winter 1910

There was no way round it. He would have to go into town for supplies. It had been a wet winter and the roof of Louis Mead's house was beginning to leak. Some of the shingles would have to be replaced, which was no problem because Mead was quite a hand with a shingling hatchet and could split them as thin and flat as anyone. Forty years as a homesteader had taught the old man many rural skills, and he was proud of this. Independence and self-sufficiency had always been the values he'd most admired and had lived his life by. But sometimes a man just had to buy what he needed instead of making it himself. Like nails to hold the shingles on his roof. He would have to go to town for supplies, unless he could find a few shingle nails.

Louis Mead stepped outside the house, trying to think of where he had put the rest of those nails. It was a bright, clear morning, a good day for traveling. The road would have dried out a bit, and the creeks would be a little lower than when he'd tried the trip just a few days before. Then he'd been forced to head home before he'd gone but a couple of miles, because that place where the road goes down by Warm Springs Creek was under water, and the current was fast. The creek would be lower now. If he could make it as far as Skaggs Springs Hotel, Louis knew he'd be alright, for the road from there was well maintained; the city people who stayed there in the summer season wouldn't have it any other way.

Mead's place was situated on a small flat at the base of the hills. To the north was Warm Springs Creek and the road to Skaggs Springs Hotel and Geyserville. It was a simple homestead, suitable, to Mead's way of thinking, to the needs of an old bachelor like himself. There was the house built of solid redwood, with its leaking shingled roof and brick chimney, the barn which doubled as a stable and workshop, and the animal shed and corral. He had lived there for nearly forty years.

Louis had come West at age twenty with his parents and younger sister in 1870. His father, Stephen P. Mead, was a newspaper correspondent for an Indiana newspaper. That man certainly had had a way with words. Mead still had a clipping of the column his father had written describing Skaggs Springs Resort the first summer they were there:

> The immensity of the view, its charming variety, its lovely lights and shades, all in connection with the soft blue sky, all first brought a feeling of joy, then sadness, as I seemed to lose my identity in pleasure all to great for my grasp.... Such a scene, once looked upon, is a feast for the memory for ever after. The pure air, clear sky, angel whisperings among the leaves, suggest to the mind a "love of earth and a great deal of credit to Heaven."

His father first visited the Springs for his health and jokingly wrote that "I am boiled morning and evening in the hot spring water and roasted in the sun between times." The entire family liked the area so much that they decided to stay. Louis lived on the family homestead near Skaggs Springs, and his parents and sister lived in Healdsburg, visiting him when they could. S.P. Mead worked as coeditor of the **Russian River Flag**, the town's Republican newspaper.

Eventually, the father and son accumulated 320 acres of hill land and

some tillable acreage. This they had done with the help of Colonel Norton, a Healdsburg attorney who knew the land business inside and out. Of course another thing to be said in the Colonel's favor, as far as the Meads were concerned, was that he was a Republican in a county run by fire-breathing southern Democrats!

In the beginning, Mead, sometimes with the help of his father, made his living as a farmer, cultivating nine or ten acres for grains and animal feed and keeping a few head of stock, as well as farmyard animals. He'd sold meat and eggs and such to the nearby resort, but in the New England tradition, he farmed mainly to support himself and to help his relatives in town. But things had changed. In 1883 his parents and sister moved to Santa Barbara, leaving Louis alone on the homestead. His father died the next year, and Louis lost touch with his family. In fact, thirteen years ago when his mother died, his name was not even mentioned in her obituary in the Healdsburg paper. Mead had been alone for so long that people forgot he once had been part of a family.

Louis, having just turned sixty, was feeling his age. His health wasn't good and he just hadn't the strength to till the ground anymore. He once used to cultivate the little ten-acre field that straddled the creek, but now the old plow had become a relic, propped up against the barn, rusted and overgrown with grass. The little field had been sold to a neighbor a few years earlier. Mead needed the money. Nowadays, he raised livestock--a few hogs, goats, and chickens--which he slaughtered and sold to his friend Curtis at the resort.

Life had never been easy on the homestead, but it was his place. He'd kept hold of it these many years by an attachment to the simple values of thrift and self-sufficiency, while his more ambitious neighbors fell into bankruptcy. He hoped to die there.

As a rule, Mead kept his tools and hardware in one of the little sheds built into the hill on the other side of the farmyard. Perhaps there would be a few nails there in the bottom of that old coffee can. He rooted around the rusted tools--there were files, pliers, hammer, rake, saw, spade, pitchfork, and other implements, and various pieces of tack and hardware. He tried the other shed. Nothing there but his dairying equipment, butter crocks, milk pans and the like, and all those bottles he'd been saving up over the years; Mead was sure that the bottles would come in handy eventually, though if anyone could see them now they'd think that the old farmer was a heavy drinker.

No, there was no choice but to make the ride into town; besides the annual property tax note might be waiting for him at the post office, and there were other supplies he needed. The wagon was soon hitched to Mead's one remaining horse; it was a poor-looking beast, old and with no wind—no good for the plow and scarcely able to make the infrequent trip to town. In the back of the wagon went some trash that had been sitting around for awhile. Louis would dump it into the creek at the usual spot, where it would be swept away without a trace by the current. Into the wagon also went that barrel of salt pork. The sow had littered at the wrong time of year again, and there was nothing to feed the piglets. Once they were weaned, there had been nothing to do but slaughter them. Perhaps Curtis down at the Springs would buy the meat.

With a few skinny dogs in tow, Mead steered the wagon across the farmyard and down the track that led to the main trail. Closing the gate behind him, Mead noted that the old eucalyptus trees along the trail up ahead were getting too tall and top heavy. They'd have to be trimmed or some of the

shallow-rooted things would be bound to blow over and block the trail. Besides, they were good-looking trees that he'd planted himself more than thirty years before. At that time it seemed that just about everyone was putting in eucalyptus. They'd been brought over from Australia by the railroad companies, who thought that lumber from the fast-growing tree would make good railroad ties. It didn't. All the same, the trees grew well in California, and people used to say that they warded off disease. Mead and his father hadn't been so sure that the sweet-smelling tree was an aid to health, but it had been worth a try since the doctors couldn't come up with anything better.

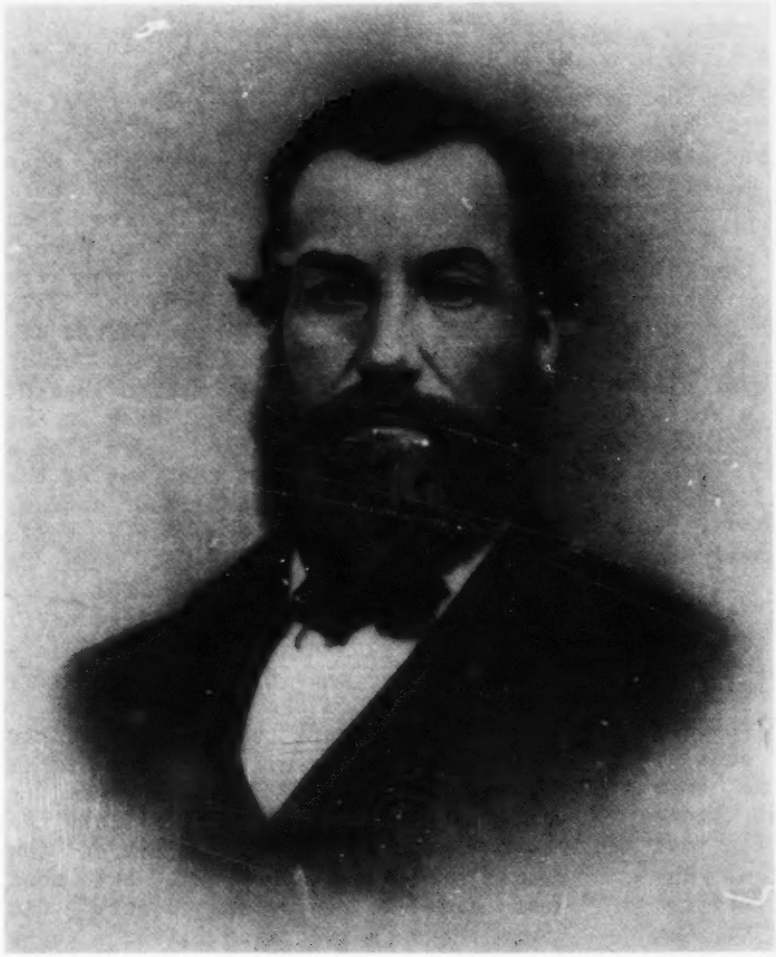
The road from Mead's to Skaggs Springs Hotel ran faithfully along the side of Warm Springs Creek. Parts had been washed out by the flood, and the wagon had to make frequent detours upslope and occasional splashes through the creek itself, the dogs still walking behind. Mead's friend, Curtis, had joked with the homesteader about buying an automobile, a pick-up truck, to make the trips into town easier. But the old man had reminded him of the winter mud and commented that his horse and wagon had never yet gotten stuck. Several local ranchers had these "machines," as they were called, though they were careful to buy only light-weight vehicles--Fords and Chevys--as the heavy makes would just sink in the mud and weighed too much for a single horse to pull out. It seemed to Louis Mead that the machines were just another thing for their owners to worry about. Sure, Curtis enjoyed rubbing the brasswork down with baking soda to make it shine, but what did he know about the way the thing worked? There was that first time when it just wouldn't start. Curtis had raised the back end and poured hot water into the radiator like you were supposed to, but nothing happened. He had to haul it about thirty miles down to Santa Rosa, where the salesman had laughed while he showed him how to pull the piece of wire under the dash that was called the choke.

After about three miles, Mead's wagon rounded the last turn before the resort. Here, the old horse turned off the main road and down the drive to the hotel. A brief conversation settled the value of Mead's pork, which was unloaded and taken to the cold cellar. No money changed hands, for in rural areas a storekeeper or entrepreneur like Curtis commonly acted as a banker for his isolated neighbors.

Soon Mead was back on the wagon and headed toward the road. The resort was deserted now, the little cabins shuttered, and the bathhouse closed up. In season, however, the place was swarming with guests--well-off families mostly, from down by San Francisco. The hotel was there even when the Mead family first made their way up Warm Springs Creek forty years before. Then they had met Alex Skaggs, the owner, who at first had been none too friendly, having had trouble with squatters on the land he considered his own. Skaggs had been a large, robust man with a bushy, chest-length beard. He had started the resort back in the 1850s, when it was nothing more than a few canvas shacks. But the fame of the hot springs and mud baths had spread, and many people swore that they would cure just about anything. Soon a redwood hotel was built, and the place had grown in size and popularity until now the resort had hundreds of guests during the season. And a very fashionable crowd they were, or so it was said. In the summer they had danced until after midnight, and Curtis was even thinking of having a swimming pool installed! Some came to take the water, some to hunt and fish on the resort's extensive property, but most just came to enjoy the country. Old Louis Mead shied away from these fashionable visitors. What did he, a man who had spent his life in physical labor, have in common with these city-

folk? A farmer took no vacations and saved his energy for work, not dancing.

Although he was not rich--far from it--Mead took pride in having worked for what he had. It had not been gained by speculating in land or profitable cash crops, as many of his neighbors had done. Now, those Pritchetts up on Dry Creek, they had done alright for themselves until the depression of the 1890s. Then nobody had the cash to buy their crops, and the family went heavily into debt to pay the mortgage on their place. People said that they paid their grocery bill with eggs. The nineties were hard for everyone, but since Louis had never concentrated exclusively on one crop or one type of animal, and he had not tried to expand his holdings by mortgaging land he already owned, he had fared better than most. The old man knew that some folks resented his independence and thrift. There was even a story of how he charged his own father for room and board. His New England reserve was taken as unfriendliness, and perhaps that is what it had become during twenty-five years of living alone. "As close as the bark on a damned tree," is how one neighbor had described him, and Curtis had enjoyed telling him so.



Alexander Skaggs

The wagon rolled over Board Bridge across Dry Creek. Grapes were the most common cash crop here. In fact, the Thomsen brothers and the Hallengrens had built their own wineries. Mead would follow the road south through the valley for a couple of miles and then cut off northeast through the hills to Geyserville. The road switchbacked along the side of the valley past the little white houses of the farmers. The oldtimers knew that Dry Creek never flooded this high and had built there for that reason; only a fool built on the flood plain.

Nearly every year, the bottomland would be flooded and the creek would leave more of the rich silt that made the Dry Creek Valley one of the most fertile in the county. But Mead the farmer knew that the soil came from somewhere and left that place poorer. He blamed it on the sheep ranchers. It had started back in the seventies, soon after the Meads came to the valley. At first, the hills were full of cattle, stock animals raised for their meat. But nobody made much money on them, for in the summer each animal needed several acres of range to get enough food and water for itself. Then someone found that sheep were much more profitable. They needed less range, could deal with the rugged hills, and their wool was easy to transport. While the price of wool was high, for maybe fifteen years, the ranchers cleared more and more timberland for grazing and brought in more and more sheep. Some people made a lot of money in those days, only to lose it all when wool prices dropped and the 1890s depression set in. But the ranchers had let all those sheep chew off the vegetation on the hills, so that when the winter rains came a lot of topsoil was just washed away into the creeks. Of course, the downstream farmers hadn't complained; they knew the value of good soil even if the ranchers didn't!

Recently, Mead had had an offer from a local rancher to buy him out. He'd refused, for aside from not wanting to lose his independence, Mead the farmer had a respect for the land that he felt wasn't shared by the ranchers. In this he wasn't alone. There had always been a feeling of "us" and "them" between the valley farmers and the ranchers in the hills--the "mountaineers" as they sometimes called themselves, and this attitude towards the land was part of it. It had always seemed to Louis Mead that, whereas all he wanted was a quiet independent life, the ranchers were willing to forgo the security of a self-sufficient farming operation for the chance of making money. He looked with disapproval on the big, new ranching operations whose owners lived in Santa Rosa or San Francisco for most of the year, leaving their ranches to be run by a couple of hired men. He'd never sell the old place to one of those outfits!

The wagon turned down the narrow track that was the cutoff to Geyserville. Soon, from up ahead, came the rhythmic jangle of bells, and that meant old Winn Higgs the teamster. Harness bells were less common than they used to be, but they still bore the same message to other road users: pull off to the side. On a narrow trail, such as the cutoff, it was good to know that you'd have some warning before you found a teamster's wagon bearing down on you. On hills it was even more important, because a fully loaded wagon could be hard to stop. Once, teamsters hauled everything that needed to get somewhere. Since the railroad had come to Sonoma County in the 1870s, the long hauls all went that way instead; there was even talk of running a spur up the Dry Creek Valley and all the way to Mendocino County. All the same, the horse and wagon were still the only way of getting stuff like wood and wool out of isolated hill country ranches; trucks rarely ventured out that far. Old Higgs would have work for a few years yet.

Mead's wagon emerged from the canyon, still accompanied by the dogs,

Tanbark Team at Geyserville (photo courtesy of Obid Bosworth)

who had trotted behind it the entire way. The little town was now visible, only a quarter mile ahead. Like the farmsteads along Dry Creek, most of Geyserville was set a little above the flood plain. From his vantage point on the hill, Mead could see the Russian River broad and winding east of town. Irregular pools of water in the fields along the river showed that it had topped its banks recently. In a wet year it would spread out to cover hundreds of acres down there in the valley.

Folks were used to the flooding; they knew it was coming and made plans. But as Mead approached the town, he still noted the effects of a natural event that nobody had expected. There, by the side of the road, was the fallen chimney and charred remains of a house that had been ruined by the 1906 earthquake. The event was recent enough for Mead to remember it vividly. Now, four years later, San Francisco was just beginning to recover. It had been a total surprise. Anyone who had lived in California for any length of time had been through plenty of quakes. Most just rattled the dishes and set lamps swinging on their chains. But the Big One, that had been different again. There were a thousand stories of how beds had moved across rooms, great long cracks opened in the earth, and wells had bubbled. Mead himself had thought it was a tree falling nearby, such was the shock wave sent through the ground. Single-story, wood buildings generally came through well, although they swayed a bit, and some came to rest at odd angles. But many brick structures were just shaken to pieces; people said they had no "give" in them. Louis Mead remembered that night well. There had been a strange red glow in the sky over to the south. The word had spread quickly: San Francisco was burning.

In the weeks and months that followed the quake, many rural men went to the city to work clearing rubble and constructing new buildings, for wages were high. With the normal supply routes disrupted, farm produce also brought high prices, and wagon loads of supplies had been sent down to the city to turn a quick profit. People from as far away as the Midwest donated what they could in the way of food and clothing in sympathy for the city's stricken residents. One rancher in the Dry Creek uplands had even adopted a little boy who had been orphaned in the quake. Nobody would forget the Big One in a hurry.

Once in town, Mead's first stop was at the store. The much-needed keg of nails and other supplies were loaded in the wagon. As it was near the beginning of the month, Mead also had to pay his bill at the store. Taking the tag, the old man carefully checked each item on the list that he had purchased in the last thirty days. Some things had been picked up for him by neighbors on their own trips to town but they ended up on Mead's bill. And there was a credit there too, for that beef he'd butchered and sold to the shopkeeper. There were only a few items on the list, yet the storekeeper wanted him to pay each month nowadays. It used to be different, of course, in

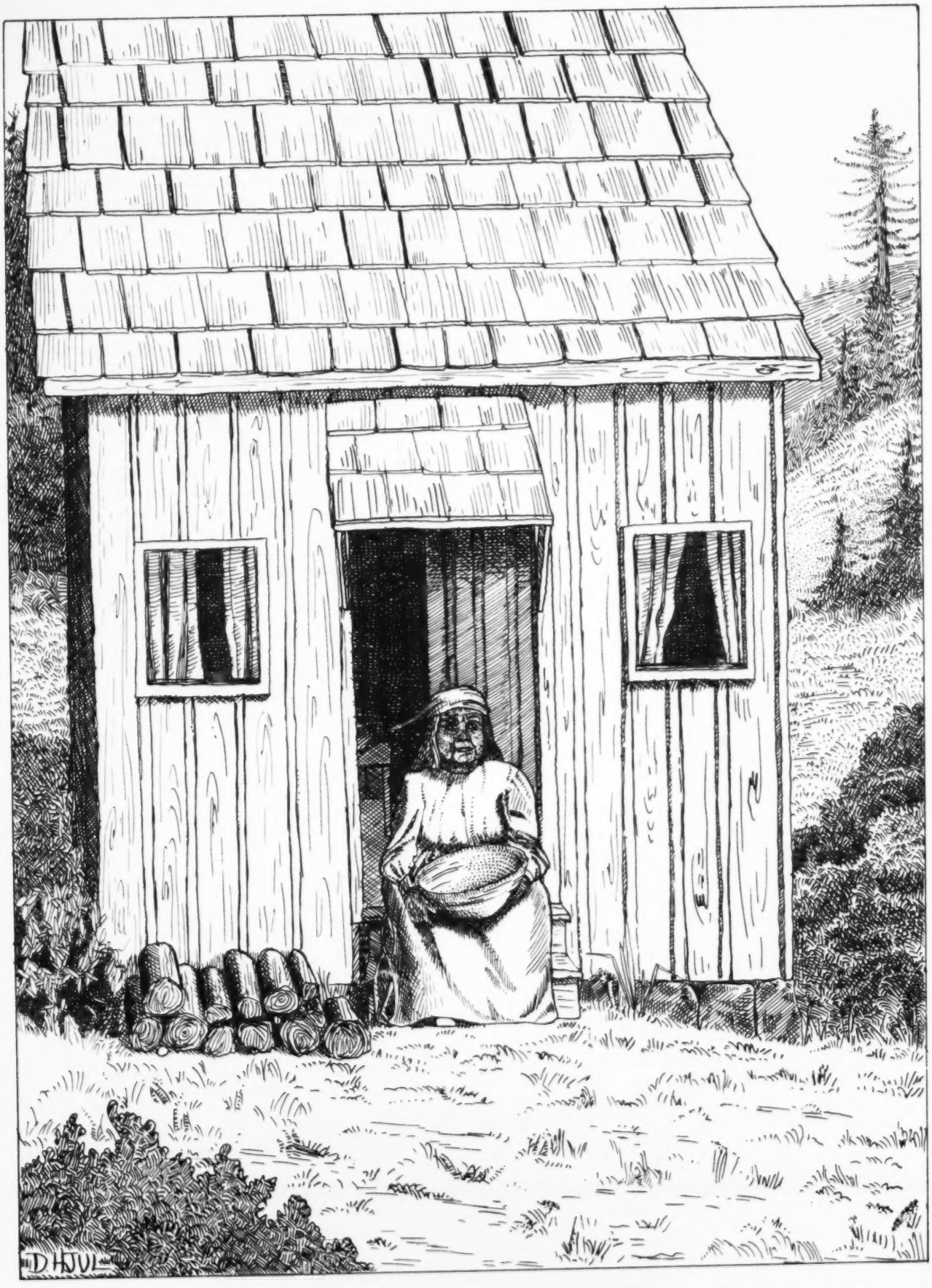
Santa Rosa after 1906 Earthquake (photo courtesy of Edwin Langhart Museum)

the old days, when a farmer's bill could mount up month after month and would be paid off when his crop was sold. When the tally had been checked and the bill paid, Mead walked over to the small brick-faced post office to check his mail. In addition to a glossy circular from a wire fence company, there was the piece of mail he'd been expecting--his county tax bill. Stuffing the envelope into his pocket, Mead walked back to the wagon to lunch on some bread and cheese, along with an onion quietly taken from the seedbox at the store.

The tax bill wasn't a whole lot, only $10.40, but it worried him all the same, for he knew that if a year came along when he didn't have the money to pay it, he might lose the farm. Back in the depression of the 1890s, Mead had heard of landowners being forced out for paltry amounts, their property being auctioned off at tax sales. As long as he had his land, he would always have enough to eat, he knew that. Mead had survived on his place when richer people had lost everything. But to pay taxes, you need cash money, and that was something he'd never had much of. This had always been the way of it. Throughout Louis Mead's life as a farmer, there were always times when he had to sell something to pay a bill that could only be settled with cash money. Even the most self-sufficient and isolated farmer wasn't allowed to get by just feeding himself and his family. At some point during the year, he'd have to go out and strip a load of tan bark or round up a bunch of wild hogs to sell, for next year's tax payment was always ahead to make you uneasy.

Postscript

Louis Carl Mead continued to live on the old place for ten more years. By then he was seventy-one years old and a sick man. Unable to support himself by his own labors and yet unwilling to give up the farm, Mead deeded his land to a Los Angeles investor on the condition that Mead be allowed to live out his days on it, and a payment to him of $200 per year. Only six months later in 1920, his failing health forced him into a Santa Rosa hospital, where he died shortly after.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The Cordova Ranch, Dry Creek Valley, Winter 1910

That morning, the ranch's new owner had come by the Indians' cabin. He'd come to tell them, he said, that they'd have to move on in a few days. Old Joe Bill, the head of the family, had protested that they'd lived there for years, that they had nowhere else to go. At this, the man had become angry. Didn't they know that the ranch had been sold? Didn't they know about private property? They'd have to get out anyway, because he was going to burn the cabin down. Juana Cook, Joe's wife, had gotten angry inside, but it did no good to argue with the Whites, they weren't reasonable people; just look how they treated each other--no respect, no dignity. They had laws, but no justice. Just look at this man, this rancher. What right did he have to burn their home, to throw them out at the hardest time of the year? But it had been this way for many years now, and there seemed to be no end to it.

Of course, the old people had foreseen all this many years ago. As a girl, Juana's mother had told her of an old man who had a dream. He lived up north in Mendocino County before the Whites came, and was so old and doubled over that he couldn't walk; his son had had to carry him around. This is what the old man would say: One day, White Rabbit--he meant White people--are going to devour all our grass, our seed, our living. We won't have nothing left in this world. An animal like a big elk with straight horns and another bigger than a deer but with round feet and hair on its neck will come with the White people; by this he meant cattle and horses. The old man's daughter thought he was crazy, but Indians came from all over to listen to him. "You young people are gonna see this happen," he said. Now, this dream was sent by the Creator as a warning to the Indian people.

These last few years that Juana's family spent in the old cabin had been peaceful compared with the way things had been in earlier times. But that was ending, and a new period of insecurity would soon begin. The cabin overlooked the Dry Creek Valley to the east. From the front door, one could almost see the old Pena house, its brown adobe walls now sheathed by painted planks and an upper story added to it. The angular building had seemed strange and artificial to local Indians when it had been built in 1841. And now its white painted wooden surface made it appear even less a product of natural substances. The Whites, it seemed, wanted to disguise the building's Mexican origins, to Americanize it, as they tried to do with everything else in the valley.

Fifty years ago and more, as a young woman, Juana had been married to Pancho Pena, one of the brothers who had built the old place. The Penas were the first non-Indians to settle the valley, and had lived next to the Dry Creek Indian village of Amalako. Some of these Mexicans weren't bad people. At least the Penas weren't. They protected Juana and her relatives when the soldiers came, when other Indians had to hide in the hills. Yes, those Mexicans thought they owned the land, and some acted like they owned the people. As a girl, Juana could recall being told how priests from the mission at Sonoma rounded up Indians by Cloverdale and baptized them. Some people had complained, but most were afraid that the priests would curse them if they resisted. These missions were said to be terrible places. People were separated from their families and had to live in big rooms with many others.

The old people had said that before the Spanish came there were few illnesses, and these could usually be cured by Indian doctors, who knew about power places and how to use them. But at the missions there was much sickness. Indians who had escaped told stories of these things. Even the Indian doctors had little power over these new diseases. The old rituals and words didn't work on the new sicknesses. Even living the right life as an Indian didn't help much. It used to be that if people did the things that men or women should, such as avoiding taboo places, performing the right rituals at the right times, and acting well toward their relatives, they would do fine. But since the Mexicans and Americans came, life was not as sure as it had been. Change and uncertainty, that's what they brought with them. They even managed to change the look of the land itself. Down there in the valley it looked like a patchwork quilt, each patch a field and each line of stitches, a fence. And the quilt was dotted with small white houses, comfortable places that stayed dry even in a wet winter like this one.

But such places were not for the likes of Juana Cook and her family. You needed money to get land these days, and Indians had none. Where would the family go when the rancher kicked

Pomoan Family camping along the Russian River (photo courtesy of Elsie Allen)

them out of their cabin? Go back to the old ways, one grandson had suggested; back in the hills they could live as Indians used to. But the old men had laughed about this to themselves, saying what does this boy know about the old ways, about reading the subtle changes in nature, and the prayers and rituals that make for a successful hunting or fishing trip. And the old women knew that people couldn't just go into the hills in the winter and expect to live. You had to plan for winter all year long by drying fish, preparing deer meat jerky, collecting acorns and storing them so they didn't get wet or musty, and a hundred other things.

Since the Whites came, doing all these things was much harder. They shut Indians out of many good food collecting places. They'd cut down many of the tan oak trees to use the bark for tanning leather, even though these gave the best acorns. In the early days Indians lived well off of the land, but they needed all of it, traveling in family groups from one food collecting area to another through the spring, summer, and fall, and living in big villages in the winter. That was why, in the language of the Dry Creek people, seasons were named for the processes of nature: spring was "bot·onkhle a·sit'met' " ('budding out time'), summer was "yuh·u met' " ('seed collecting time'), fall was "si·ma phulu·met' " ('leaves blowing off time'), and winter was "ah sic·i" ('world sleeping time'). Winter was no time to be homeless. In winter, families should gather together in some secure place. This was the time for young people to be instructed by their elders in the things that people should know. They would hear of the world's creation and learn about the nature and behavior of plants and animals. Most importantly, they would learn the proper way of living for men and women, how people should treat each other, and how they should treat the other occupants of the world, both natural and supernatural.

Pushed out again. It seemed that the Whites were always shuffling Indians around, and being none too gentle about it either! Just last evening in the cabin, the story had been told of how, years ago, Whites tried to get rid of all the Dry Creek Indians: Only a few summers after they discovered gold up in the mountains, many White people started to come to this valley. They wanted the land and wouldn't share it. So they rounded up all the Indians along Dry Creek. But the Indians hid all their grinding stones when the White people came.

The White people drove all the Indians away, rounded them up just like cattle and didn't even feed them. Treated them awful bad. They drove them to Clear Lake. Yes, they drove them. The Whites rode horses. There were soldiers there, too. The soldiers were real mean; they whipped the Indians, hurried them, didn't even let them rest. They whipped them. Many people died along the way. Old Joe Bill over there, he dug a shallow grave for this old lady who had wanted to be buried with this basket she carried along with her. You know, women's baskets should always be buried or burned when their maker dies. It was slow walking, lots of old people, young children; they were scared, tired, very hungry. They didn't know one day from another, they were so scared. Those were mean White people. When they got to Clear Lake they ate manzanita berries and tule roots. But later they escaped. They walked back. They told the story of the Death March often, so that their young people should not forget. Fortunately, Pancho Pena had prevented this from happening to his wife Juana and her family. When it was clear that the valley was not a safe place for Indians, Pancho had given his wife and her parents horses, and they escaped to the coast where there were fewer settlers. There, the family had lived off the land and always kept moving. They knew that sometime they would have to get back to their valley, for the relatives were there and nobody

can survive without family. And besides, the coast belonged to the Kashaya Indians, and Juana and her family were outsiders in that area. Fearfully, after two years, they returned to the valley.

Later, with refugees from the Death March, Juana and her family had set up a small village in an out-of-the-way spot. The village was called Polosha Chunalokwani, or 'Where Oak Ball Drifts Out After Flood.' It wasn't a bad place, and was near some good sedge plant beds that the women had cultivated and thinned for generations. Not that there's anything left of the old place now. Quite recently, when Juana had gone there with a granddaughter to gather the sedge they needed to make a special basket, she had noticed that the land had been plowed and grape seedlings planted there. There was hardly a trace of the village to be seen. And yet, as she had told the granddaughter, the presence of the old timers still remained. Around such places one should show respect, to honor the people who were born there, lived, and died there.

Yes, respect has to be shown to places as well as living things, like sedge. A woman should always go respectfully to gather sedge, pray before starting, and thank the Creator and the plants for their generosity. Otherwise, the bed will turn out to be no good, like the one just north of here. That had been a good producer for many years, long, straight roots. But some careless woman had gone there during her monthly period and, well, the roots became stumpy and brittle, no good. The granddaughter should remember these things for the time when she had no elders to guide her and keep her out of trouble.

The young ones today didn't seem as careful as when Juana was a girl. She was sure that her own mother hadn't had this much trouble teaching the young children when they lived down at Oak Ball Village. Of course, it was forty years ago and more when people started living at Oak Ball, and things were different then, more like the old ways when people traveled around to collect food during much of the year. Oak Ball was a pretty big village with lots of people. At Oak Ball people lived by gathering food by the old methods, when they could get permission from the new owners or when they could sneak past their notice. It seemed so strange to sneak around on land that was rightfully your own. In the spring, women and children collected clover, and dug for Indian potatoes and other roots. In summer and early fall many of the men, women, and older children would go off to pick hops and other fruit for farmers, leaving the young children with the old folks to take care of them. Some men did sheep shearing. Everyone got back together for things like building a fish dam up on the Russian River and, in the fall, for harvesting the acorn crop. The only time everyone was back at the village was in the winter. Then, like now, the only work to be had at this time of year was chopping firewood.

It was about this time when she lived at Oak Ball, Juana recalled, that the new religion came to Dry Creek. And the people were ready for it too; for the hope it brought of a better life. The people had lost faith in the old religious leaders, for their power was not strong enough any more. But the new religion was led by dreamers who had their messages directly from the Creator. On Dry Creek, the dreamer was a man called Kiayaman or Jack. He had heard of the new religion up by Clear Lake and came back to tell his people. He was sure and hopeful in his message, and everyone was caught up by it. From what the dreamer said, the world would soon come to an end. The Indians who were faithful would survive and the old ways would return. He told the Dry Creek Indians, and the Kashaya as well, to build big ceremonial houses. He taught new dances that the faithful should do there to bring on the end and renewal of the world. For

University of California Anthropologist S.A. Barrett at door of Pomoan summer dwelling (photo courtesy of Lowie Museum of Anthropology, University of California, Berkeley)

a while, the people thought that the world really was going to end all at once. No one wore gold or silver or put on White's clothes. The girls even gave up their rings. When all this was going strong, Jack held a big dance at the new dance house at the old village site of Amalako on Dry Creek. People from all over came to hear him and to dance. It was a big crowd. And this worried the White people. They thought that the Indians were getting ready to fight so they sent for soldiers, and when the soldiers came the Indians had to get up and go. They didn't give the dancers a chance to change out of their costumes. They were driven away like cattle.

Like Oak Ball Village, the dance house at Amalako was gone now. From the cabin up on the Cordova Ranch, Juana could see the field where it had stood, although it was too far for her to make out the bowl-shaped depression that she knew marked its sunken floor. But the new religion was still strong. After a while the dreamers had worked out that they had misunderstood the Creator's message, that the White people weren't just going to be blown away by the wind. Nowadays the dreamers still spoke of hope for Indians, but the better life was to come from a return to traditional values. As one who had lived to see many changes, it was clear to Juana that the most important thing

that the new religion had done was to bring local Indians back together again. Without family and community to back you up, how could a person survive in this world? After Oak Ball Village had split up, so many Dry Creek people had moved out of the area and away to Healdsburg, Cloverdale, and even Santa Rosa to find work. Yet the dance house on the Cordova Place still brought many people back to the valley for dances and other rites. At least fifteen people were buried on the ranch, including several close relatives and some of Juana's grandchildren. It was a place full of memories, although they had lived there less than ten years.

It would be hard to leave. But, of course, that is what she had said of Oak Ball Village when her family, the Lucases, the Copas, and the others had moved from there. They had been luckier than many, for when Nellie Lucas married Beneval Cordova--a Yaqui Indian from Mexico--they took some of the Oak Ball families with them to the ranch Cordova had bought on the west side of the valley.

The Cordova Place had been a safe refuge for some years now. The families couldn't be thrown out, and it was a good base from which to do seasonal work. They saw few White people and that was fine; contact with them just brought trouble--well, usually. There were those two from the university who had stopped by not so long ago. Now, they were odd ones. They said they were interested in learning about how things were in the old days. Strange, it seemed that these men wanted to know about things that were women's work: picking seeds, leaching acorn flour, and those kind of things. Yet they spoke with the men of the cabin, not the women, and the younger ones at that, who knew little about the old ways. When they spoke of the Mihilakawna, the Makahmo, and the Kashaya, they called them all Pomo. It was funny, since every child knew that these were separate groups. All of the Mihilakawna knew the boundaries of the Kashaya territory, and most people wouldn't hunt or collect food there without permission. Recently, there had been more marriages between people from different groups, but it didn't mean that Indians had forgotten who their own people were!

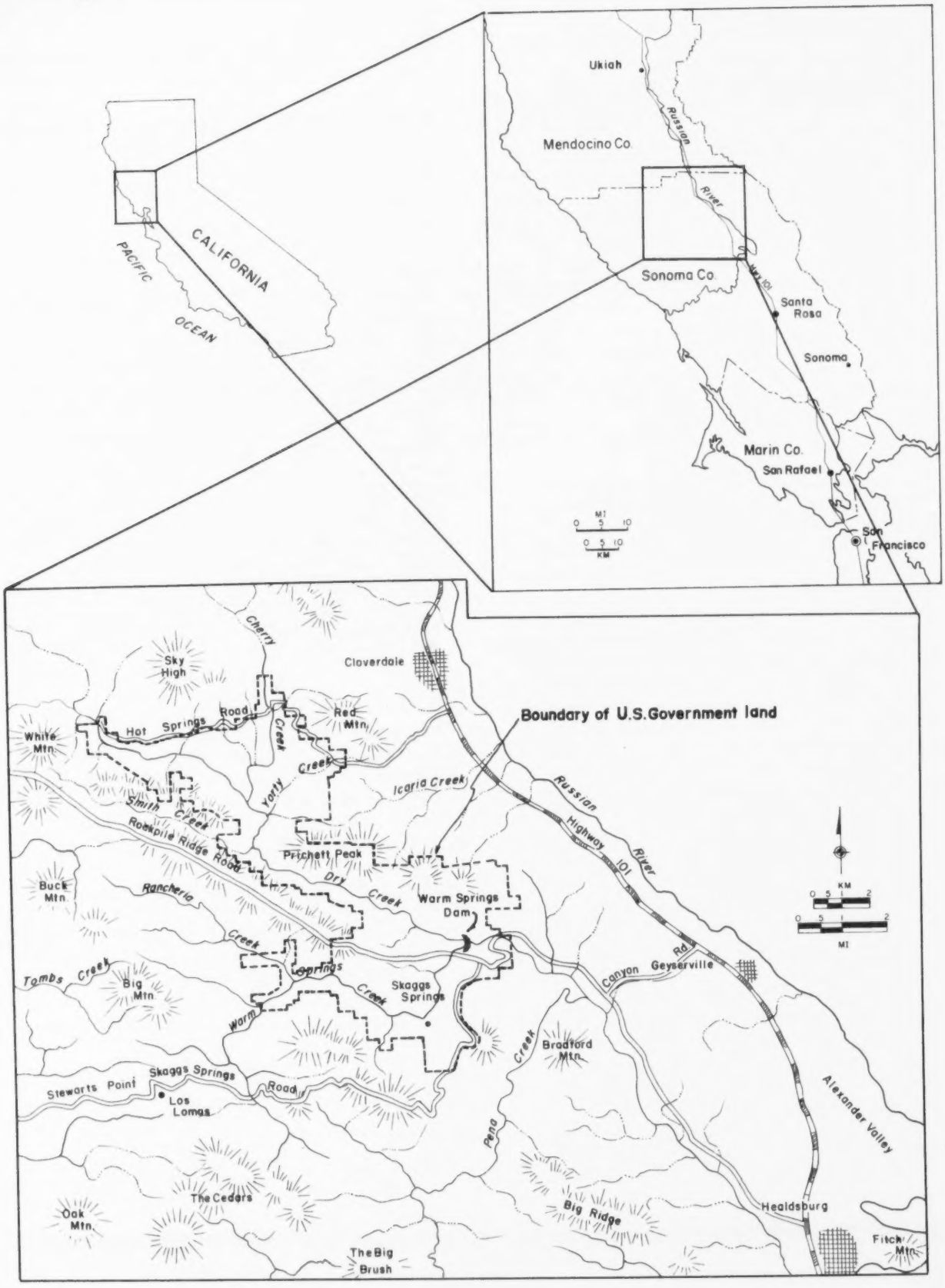
Yes, the city men's ignorance was funny, but it was serious, too, because they shaped the way other Whites viewed Indians. They seemed to think that the Indian people were finished, that they had to find out all about the old ways before they were forgotten. And, perhaps, they were partly right. Juana could recall the days when everyone was able to speak their own language and many could also speak the language of a nearby Indian group. Now, some Indian children were not learning the language of their people, but only English. In those government schools, the children weren't allowed to speak any language except English. Already English words had crept into Mihilakawna speech; they spoke of automobiles, the sheriff, wire, and a hundred other things for which their language had never needed a word. How would it all end?

Postscript

Later that week, in the winter of 1910, they left the cabin. There were about thirty-five people in all, from newborn babies to Juana Cook herself, who was then about eighty years old. Most of their possessions had to be left behind, as there was no way of carrying them.

With nowhere else to go, the families took refuge under a bridge. They put canvas down on the ground and hung blankets for walls. The winter damp got to the acorn flour and turned it musty and bad tasting. They ate it just the same. These must have been the worst days. But after a while--whether it was days, weeks, or months is unknown--a local White farmer gave them a place to stay on his property. At the age of about eighty-five, Juana went back to work. After all these years she was, once again, a cook, but this time at a resort near Cloverdale. Juana Cook died in 1917. Her granddaughter remembered her as a "remarkable woman...and a good woman too."

Warm Springs Dam-Lake Sonoma Project Area, 1983; Vicinity Map



Warm Springs Dam-Lake Sonoma, October 1983

Archaeologist Mick Hayes bounced along in "Big Blue," a four-wheel drive Ford pickup truck. Mick was an employee of the Warm Springs Cultural Resources Study, an organization under contract to the Corps of Engineers to study the seventeen thousand acres the Corps had purchased for a dam and reservoir.

About twelve miles out of Healdsburg, a bend in the road by a deeply cut bank brought the archaeologist in sight of the dam. Where the valley had begun to narrow and its sides to steepen, it was blocked by the dam's great bulk. On this mid-October morning, Dry Creek was barely ten feet wide and not more than two feet deep. It was difficult to believe that this languid stream would ever fill up the enormous basin behind the dam.

Crossing the creek immediately in front of the dam, Mick encountered the Visitors Center and Fish Hatchery, where, for ten cents, the visitor could buy a handful of fish food to throw to the fry in their cement ponds. On the opposite side of the road he found some low, official-looking buildings and trailer offices. Near one of the trailers he met Richard Stradford, a Corps of Engineers' archaeologist, who would be working with him that day. The two men drove past the cluster of buildings, up steep Stewarts Point-Skaggs Springs Road, to the Overlook. They had arranged to meet a little early so Mick could have a quick look at the area before they started work.

Lake Sonoma was to form behind Warm Springs Dam, built over the past sixteen years at the confluence of Warm Springs and Dry creeks. While Dry Creek Valley was some two thousand feet wide at this point, Warm Springs Creek flowed through a narrow, V-shaped gorge. About a half mile south of this confluence, more than seven hundred and fifty feet above the valley floor, the Overlook had been built, with an observation tower. From here Mick and Richard were able to look down on the dam's great crescent. At its base, creek water had accumulated in a small, stagnant-looking pond.

Fill for the dam had come mostly from the ridge on the opposite side of the valley. The area was now brown, unnaturally terraced, and striped with long, parallel gullies. In some places, new grass had grown up bright green and strangely artificial-looking in comparison with the faded green-grey of the unterraced hillsides. Down in the valley, the area that would become Lake Sonoma had been cleared of trees and shrubs. The effect was a ghost shoreline on both sides of the valley.

Back on the road again, Big Blue crossed Warm Springs Creek by the new bridge that carried Rockpile Road out onto the ridge of the same name. Driving along this ridge, one could begin to experience the character of the uplands that extend to the west. This country is quite different from the valley bottomland. Sheep and cattle ranching have been the chief pursuit in the uplands since the mid-nineteenth century. The sloping, open pasture on the ridge's south side reflects the land clearing undertaken on a massive scale by nineteenth-century ranchers to create grazing land.

Today the dam and lake dwarf all other human imprints on the landscape; yet, even before the construction, this area was no pristine wilderness, but a region changed by human use over

several thousand years. One can still see remnants of times past in the split poles of sheep fencing from the days before woven wire and in the remains of family orchards.

Having finished their brief sightseeing, the archaeologists decided it was time for them to get to work. Today they were heading to the area around Skaggs Springs, the site of a once fashionable resort. They had to open the locked gate to get access to the old Stewarts Point-Skaggs Springs Road, a road now closed to public vehicles although open to hikers for day use.

The old road would soon be covered with water as Lake Sonoma filled from the winter rains that could not be far off. The Corps of Engineers had constructed a temporary access road at a higher elevation above the creek, where it would not be flooded. This road presented more of a thrill, or fright, depending on one's point of view; from the truck window, the archaeologists could look down the steep mountain face to the creekbed, literally hundreds of feet below. Mick was a cautious driver, not like some four-wheel daredevils, who drove as if there were no tomorrows; Mick wanted to get home in one piece to his wife and three children.

It was a relief to be off the steep gravel road and onto the level old paved road following Warm Springs Creek. But the old Skaggs Springs Road turned out to be not much better than the access route. It had been a year or so since Mick had been out to the Skaggs Springs area, and he was surprised at how quickly the roads had degenerated since they had ceased to be public thoroughfares. In many places the old road had caved in and slid down towards the creek below. There was often only just enough room for the truck to maneuver between the steep canyon wall that rose to one side and the sheer drop into the gorge on the other.

Mick and Richard had spent many field seasons working together on the archaeological excavations financed by the Corps of Engineers prior to the completion of the Warm Springs Dam and the filling of Lake Sonoma. It was good to be in the area together again and to talk about old times. Today their job was to install permanent magnetic markers at some of the historic archaeological sites. Mick and Richard would probably be the last archaeologists to set foot on these sites for many years, as the water of Lake Sonoma would soon cover them. That was why they were marking the locations, so that future archaeologists could find and possibly re-examine the historic sites, should the water level of the lake fall below them. This had actually happened in 1977 at Lake Mendocino to the north, where archaeologists had re-examined sites that had been underwater for twenty years.

One of the historic sites they visited that day was the homestead of Louis Mead, less than a mile west of Skaggs Springs Resort. At the springs, a few tall trees and the concrete swimming pool were all that remained of this once fashionable vacation spot. Work done by historical archaeologists at the homestead and at the resort had highlighted the difference between the lifestyles of Louis Mead and the tourists at Skaggs. Mick remembered hearing the historic crew speculate about Louis' character; they had found a large stash of liquor bottles in one of his outbuildings. Mead was, evidently, somewhat of a hermit who lived alone for many years and never married.

At each site, Mick and Richard took turns digging a post hole three feet deep and ten inches wide. Then Richard put in the marking tube and they filled the remainder of the hole with cement. The metal marker, inscribed with a site number, remained above the surface. The markers were meant to last.

Historic Preservation and the Project

The work that Stradford and Hayes were doing was part of a relatively new field called Cultural Resources Management. It is tied to government planning and environmental concerns. Increased ecological awareness sparked by the environmental movement in the 1960s, gave birth to legislation that required public evaluation of the effects of all federally funded projects. The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 dictated that prior to a project's approval, a report must be prepared that considered the project's impact on a number of factors. Topics to be considered included soils and geology, wildlife habitat, regional economic growth, earthquake safety, vegetation, air and water quality, and cultural resources. With regard to the last factor, the Environmental Policy Act mandated federal agencies to "preserve important historic, cultural and natural aspects of our national heritage and maintain, wherever possible, an environment which supports diversity and variety of individual choice."

The consideration of cultural resources had been stipulated in even greater detail by the National Historic Preservation Act passed by Congress in 1966. It instructed federal agencies that "the historical and cultural foundation of our Nation should be preserved as a living part of our community life and development in order to give a sense of orientation to the American people." Thus, unlike their colleagues in the academic sphere who spent summers digging on exotic, foreign sites, Mick and Richard worked close to home and under a set of legal guidelines.

In this case, the federal agency administering the work was the Corps of Engineers. Unlike the environmental agencies, whose formation was relatively recent, the Corps is a federal institution of long standing. The United States Army Corps of Engineers, which had roots in the American Revolution, was formally established by an act of Congress in 1802. Headquartered at West Point, this organization was the only engineering school in the country for many years. Army engineers, therefore, became involved in many civil projects, including the construction of harbors, canals, and railroads.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, flood control became one of the responsibilities of the Corps of Engineers. It was not until the 1930s, however, that they began building dams and reservoirs for flood control. Then the concept of multipurpose projects--with flood control, water conservation, hydroelectric power, and recreation as benefits--was put into practice with the employment of Depression-weary workers and the use of federal funds.

Warm Springs Dam and Lake Sonoma were a long time in the making. In the late 1930s, flood damages suffered throughout the Russian River Basin prompted local groups to seek federal aid for flood control, and in 1938 the Corps of Engineers made its first study in the area. After ten years of study and various proposals, the District Engineer suggested that dams be built in Coyote Valley on the Russian River and on Dry Creek. By 1959 the Coyote Dam-Lake Mendocino was in operation, and a few years later, Congress

authorized construction of Warm Springs Dam.

Dam construction began in 1967 but was halted seven years later by a court order arising out of concern over the project's overall safety and its effect on the environment as had been described in 1973 in an Environmental Impact Statement. A major issue was the project's effect on cultural resources, including archaeological sites and Native American interests.

The Corps' therefore undertook a comprehensive study to learn about the cultural resources in the project area. A number of important sites were found and were nominated for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. Accordingly, in 1976, the Dry Creek-Warm Springs Valleys Archeological District was formally placed on the Register. A Memorandum of Agreement was signed by the Corps to initiate further in-depth professional study and to take steps to compensate for the project's adverse effects on these resources.

History and Archaeology

In 1978, the same year that work on the dam resumed, the Corps of Engineers began its major cultural resources studies. The work was to be done by the newly created Warm Springs Cultural Resources Study, an organization made up of distinguished scholars from four universities and several private contractors. The study was later described by **New West** magazine as a "textbook example of cultural resources management," gathering together professionals of a "multidisciplinary breadth never before contemplated by a government agency": prehistoric and historical archaeologists, historians, ethnohistorians, linguists, ethnographers, geographers, botanists, ethnobotanists, geologists, folklorists, and an anthropological museologist.

Through these studies the Corps was meeting the objectives of the Historic Preservation and Environmental Policy acts. This pamphlet is one part of the Corps' continuing effort to fulfill the intent of these laws and to make the results of its studies available to the public. It has presented only one aspect of this large research project: the history of the area, with historical archaeology as a focus.

Archaeologists excavate and study the material remains of past peoples. These cultures are often very old, as suggested by the Greek root "archaeo," meaning "ancient." Sometimes archaeologists unearth magnificent finds, such as those often exhibited at great museums around the world. Contemporary archaeologists, however, are not interested only in the spectacular, nor do they confine their studies to "ancient" peoples.

One segment of the discipline, called historical archaeology, is concerned with the remains of the recent past. Archaeological excavation, in combination with historical research, has commonly been conducted at the former homes of famous people, such as Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson. Archaeologists also focus on sites connected with ordinary people, in an attempt to produce a broader, more authentic history of past times.

Among the goals of historical archaeologists is to gather information about people's day-to-day experiences by sifting through their garbage dumps, mapping the layout of their buildings and farmsteads, and collecting references to them in old documents, newspapers, and personal correspondence. This kind of history may lack some of the excitement of blood-curdling battles between armies or of medieval pagentry, but it is rich in the details of the human condition, of day-to-day thoughts and actions, and of

human resourcefulness and perseverance under sometimes difficult conditions. The preceding sketches were an effort to demonstrate the value of this method and approach.

Archaeologists worked in the Lake Sonoma project area for more than seven years. Their aim was twofold: to discover all of the human occupation sites in the area and to identify any damage that would result from construction or flooding. The first part of this job--finding the sites--is known as "survey." It involves a team of people spaced a few yards apart, actually walking over the area, carefully inspecting the ground for signs of past human presence. Any place where these signs are found is recorded as a "site." Sites from both the prehistoric and the historic periods may reflect a variety of uses, or a single purpose use at one time or over hundreds of years.

Eventually, more than 120 archaeological sites, ranging from prehistoric villages thousands of years old to nineteenth-century ranches, were recorded; and many were directly threatened by the formation of Lake Sonoma. It was the archaeologists' next job to evaluate the endangered sites so that plans could be developed to salvage some of the information they contained. The approaches taken by prehistoric and historical archaeologists toward their sites are quite

Archaeologists plan the day's work [left to right, Mick Hayes, Kent McGeachy, Bob Orlins] (photo courtesy of Richard Lerner)

different from each other. Learning about prehistoric times must rely heavily on what can be dug out of the ground, but archaeologists studying the recent past see information excavated from the ground as only one of their sources of data. Often their most valuable insights come through examining the "fit" between artifacts from a particular site and information from other sources. As a group, historical archaeologists specialize in rescuing obscure, but potentially important, information from unexpected places.

Sources for Local History

In the nineteenth century, as today, government agencies kept records on and for the populace. Many of these records survive and are available for researchers to use. Documentary research can be very time consuming, but the amount and variety of information that can be found about ordinary people is remarkable. From the 1880 U.S. Population Census, for example, we know the names, ages, birthplaces, and school attendance of John and Mary Ferry's ten children; we also learn that the eldest child was mentally retarded, and that John's stepfather lived with the family. The Agricultural Census, compiled at the same time, lists the family's produce and livestock and estimates the value of their farm, fences, and machinery at $20,000. The 1879 Sonoma County Tax Assessment Roll tells us the location of Louis Mead's homestead along Warm Springs Creek and the value of his meager personal belongings, including his watch, gun, furniture, horse and wagon, "farming utensils," two cows, twenty-four goats, and four hogs.

County Recorders Offices contain a wealth of information on land transfers, mortgages, and other business dealings. Scattered among these old leather-bound volumes are also gems of a more personal nature. On page 884 of Sonoma County Deed Book 12, for example, one finds a document recorded in 1862 that lists the names of mules and horses belonging to Alexander Skaggs (the founder of Skaggs Springs Resort); these include such typically nineteenth-century titles as Clipper, Lucy, Fly, Yankee, Kit, Muggins, Dolly, Peggy, Snip, and Pompey.

In the voter registration list of the 1890s, we even find physical descriptions of all voters: their height; hair, skin, and eye color; and other distinguishing characteristics. From this source we learn that Robert Hood had a scar on his left cheek, John Ferry had gray hair, and Thomas Fraser had a crippled left hand.

Maps are particularly important sources for historical archaeologists, for maps place people on the ground at particular points in time. Many maps also show buildings and improvements with notations such as "John Ferry's Dairy and Barn," "W.S. Ford's house and field," and so on.

Oral history interviews with former residents of the project area provided researchers with a wealth of information on people, places, and activities. Some people remembered hearing stories from their parents about Sylvester Scott and John Ferry, while others actually had known Louis Mead or Orville Baldwin. Baldwin wrote his own "Reminiscences," thus providing a very readable portrayal of life on his ranch.

The lore of the local Pomoan Indians has been passed from generation to generation in stories told by the elders. Collecting this oral history was also an important aspect of the Warm Springs Cultural Resources Study. In keeping with the spirit of environmental laws, the study also focused upon the importance of the area to modern Pomoan groups whose ancestors had occupied it from antiquity. By stressing the living, dynamic aspects of local Indian culture--rather than

Archaeologist at work

only treating it historically, as a collection of cultural relics from an archaic way of life--the studies were able to make contributions of great importance to scholarly knowledge. At the same time, this approach revealed the efforts contemporary Indians make to retain their cultural integrity. From the first such research to be conducted in the area, it was clear that many Dry Creek Indians still lived nearby; far from having melted into the cultural "pot," they were proud of their heritage and deeply attached,

emotionally and spiritually, to the Dry Creek-Warm Springs Creek area.

Most of the artifacts that historical archaeologists extract from their sites have little or no monetary worth or even curio value. Indeed, if individual pieces are removed from the context of the site where they are discovered, few have any value at all, even to archaeologists. Yet, with some knowledge of the area in which a group of artifacts came to be discarded during a given time period, useful insights can be gained from even the most seemingly ordinary remains.

Broken pieces of ceramic tableware, glass bottles and jars, rusting nails and metal tools, and food bone are the most common finds on historic sites. The ceramics recovered from the Lake Sonoma sites were similar to those found on other rural sites; they were notable for their lack of decoration and their simple, functional, durable and inexpensive nature. There were few fancy pieces.

A large proportion of the ceramics were of a variety described by contemporary potters and merchants as "Ironstone China," produced throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Staffordshire, England. The use of the word "china" in the term Ironstone China does not indicate the porcelain or bone china highly prized by collectors, but a type of cheap, plain, and durable white earthenware, mass produced and widely exported by hundreds of Staffordshire potteries. Vessels made of Ironstone China are commonly marked on the base with a design containing the name of the manufacturer. These makers' marks are of great help to archaeologists, for the place and date of production can usually be identified with some accuracy. Although by 1880 American potters produced large quantities of Ironstone China, American consumers preferred the British product, which was of a higher quality but cost about the same. It was not until the twentieth century that American and British manufacturers commanded equal shares of the American market.

Glass bottles are also good dating tools, for they are often embossed with the name of the product and its maker. An idea of the eating and drinking habits of a site's occupants can be reconstructed by examining the glass artifacts found there. A rough idea of a family's degree of self-sufficiency is reflected in the proportion of home canning jars to purchased bottled and canned goods. Food bones found on a site can also be used to reconstruct eating habits and self-sufficiency. Specialists can distinguish between domestic (cow, pig, sheep, chicken, etc.) and wild animal (deer, quail, etc.) bones, and between home butchering and meat cuts purchased in town. They also have a good idea of the relative price of different cuts; pig's feet, for example, cost much less than sirloin steak. Thus food bones can indicate the residents' economic standing--whether they were poor or rich or in between

In combination, the artifacts recovered from Lake Sonoma archaeological sites were used to find out many things about the people who discarded them long ago. As objects, they also gave a more tangible sense to the past, rounding out the picture formed from documents and oral history.

Getting Involved

To many of the archaeologists, participating in the Warm Springs Cultural Resources Study was more than just a job digging, cataloguing, researching, and interpreting. For them, the attachment to the Lake Sonoma Area went deeper than merely a relationship between scientists and their subject matter. For several years, many of them spent a three to six month field season in makeshift

"Clipping a Sheep" (from Stephens' Book of the Farm)

camps, becoming part of the natural setting. Spending such long periods living and working together, they developed a sense of community spirit, linked not only by their work but also by the hardships of camp life and the boredom that is often part of archaeological excavation.

The typical camp was on a terrace by a creek; the creekside setting was particularly important after a day's work in 100-degree heat. Some of the camps were actually on the archaeological sites, such as the John Ferry homestead site, giving the crew additional opportunity to commune with their data. The most permanent structure was a mobile office trailer that doubled as a lab in which artifacts were cleaned, labeled, and catalogued. The open-air kitchen area was located nearby, with its huge cast-iron skillets and restaurant-scale pots and pans. Since as many as thirty people would eat at the camp, the kitchen equipment included a gas stove and refrigerator, run off a propane tank. Tables, benches, and old armchairs and couches were found around the kitchen and "community center" firepit.

Years of experience under field conditions have made many archaeologists particular about some of their

material comforts; "roughing it" is no novelty to them. A good cook, therefore, is as important as any scientific member of the team. A feast of roast turkey with all the trimmings, prepared and eaten out of doors, is something to remember. Unlike boy scouts or the military, archaeologists in the field have little sense of regimentation in the arrangement of their camps. Their strong sense of individualism is plainly expressed in the variety of their tents and trailers, and how they are spaced wide apart for maximum privacy.

Once off-duty, archaeologists sought relief from monotony and the weather, which seemed always to be either much too hot or too cold. For some camp-dwellers, relief came via bizarre antics. Volleyball games on the camp court often degenerated into mad-dog style antics and riotous clowning. On returning to the campsite late one evening, two just-married crew members found their tent so thoroughly wrapped with toilet paper that they could not get in. The evening entertainment often featured slide shows, amusingly narrated by crew members, of their digs and vacations in far away places, or of previous seasons' work at the Lake Sonoma project, or even of their pets.

On most working days, however, exhaustion took its toll early in the evening, leaving only a few diehards to late-night conversations around the stone-lined firepit. From these field camps, archaeologists were the last people to live and work in many parts of the reservoir basin.

For Further Reading

The history of the Lake Sonoma Area is contained not only in documents, but also in the landscape, in the ground, and in the memories of area residents descended, in fact and spirit, from the original settlers. We hope that the sketches presented in this volume have contributed to the present understanding of the lives of ordinary people in the past and perhaps inspired some readers to seek their own roots through historical detective work.

We would like to recommend the following books:

James Deetz, **In Small Things Forgotten** (New York: Doubleday, 1977). A very readable introduction to the goals and methods of historical archaeology.

Anita Kunkler, **Hardscrabble: A Narrative of the California Hill Country** (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1975). An enjoyable autobiography of a young woman's experiences on an isolated Shasta County homestead.

Bruce Levene, **Mendocino County Remembered: An Oral History** (Mendocino County Historical Society, 1976). A collection of two hundred interviews with early residents of Mendocino County, recording the everyday occurrences of people who experienced them firsthand.

Malcolm Margolin, **The Way We Lived: California Indian Reminiscences, Songs, and Stories** (Berkeley: Heyday Books, 1981). A moving and authentic selection of Native Californian literature.

Other Readings on the Lake Sonoma Area

To fulfill its obligations to the public, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has published other reports and pamphlets on the cultural resources studies at Lake Sonoma. Many, including those listed below, are non-technical and written to appeal to a general audience. Information about obtaining them may be gotten by contacting:

Visitors Center, Lake Sonoma
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
3333 Skaggs Springs Road
Geyserville, Ca. 95441

David W. Peri and Scott M. Patterson, **The Mihilakawna Pomo of Dry Creek** (1984).

Mary Praetzellis, Adrian Praetzellis, and Suzanne B. Stewart, **Before Warm Springs Dam: A History of the Lake Sonoma Area** (1984).

Suzanne B. Stewart, **Prehistory of the Lake Sonoma Area** [pamphlet] (1984).

Vera-Mae Fredrickson and David W. Peri, **People of Lake Sonoma: Mihilakawna and Makahmo Pomo** [pamphlet] (1984).

Warm Springs Cultural Resources Study

David A. Fredrickson Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park	Principal Investigator
Martin A. Baumhoff University of California, Davis	Associate Investigator, Prehistoric Archaeology
Vera-Mae Fredrickson Berkeley, CA.	Associate Investigator, Interpretation
Roberta S. Greenwood Pacific Palisades, CA.	Associate Investigator, Historic Archaeology
David W. Peri Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park	Associate Investigator, Ethnography and Ethnobotany
Dorothea J Theodoratus California State University, Sacramento	Associate Investigator, History and Ethnohistory
Otis Parrish Santa Rosa, CA.	Native American Coordinator (July 1978-October 1980)
Kathleen Smith Healdsburg, CA.	Native American Coordinator (November 1980-1984)